

# Cuisine

food, wine & good living

ISSUE 142 SEPTEMBER 2010

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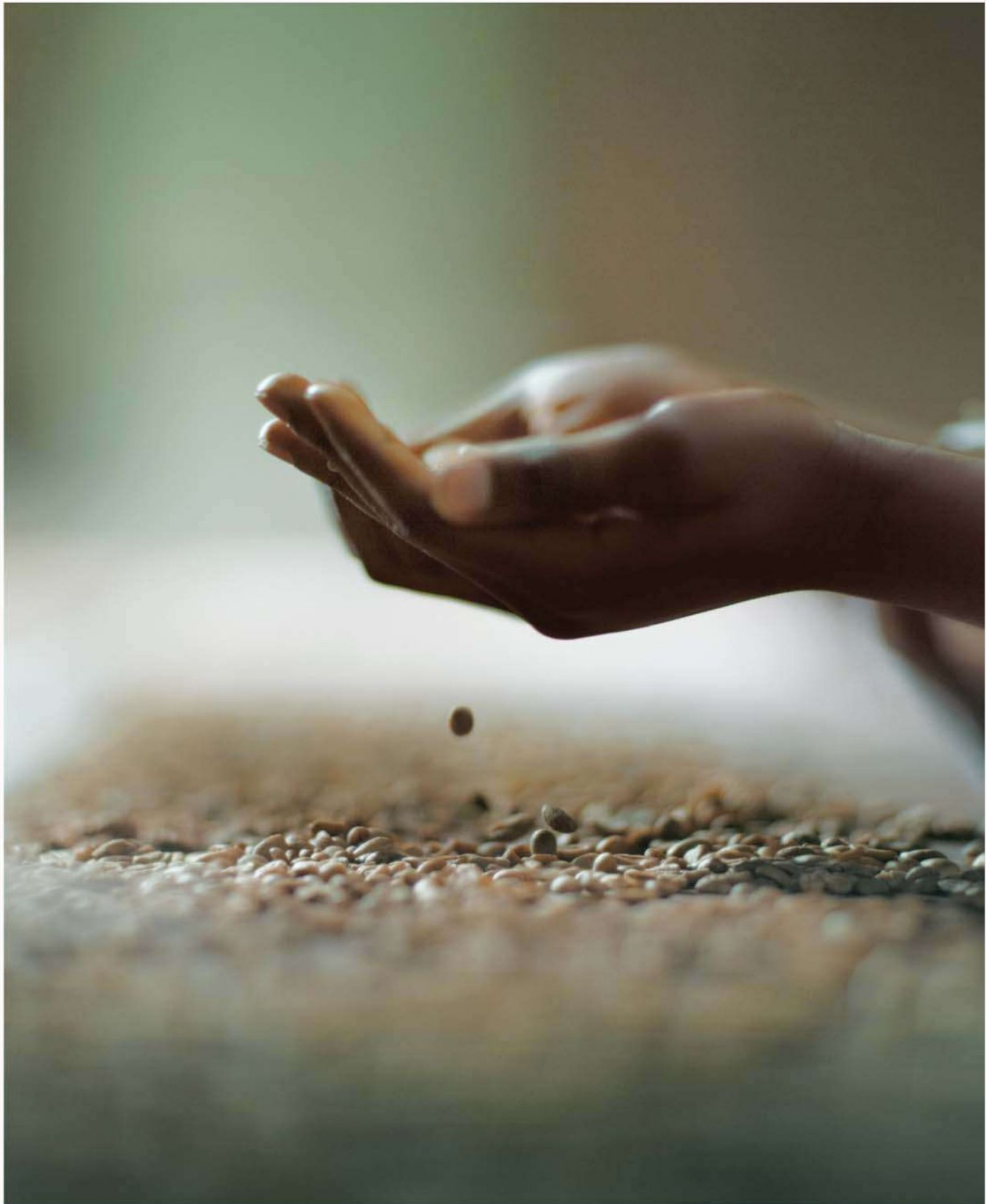
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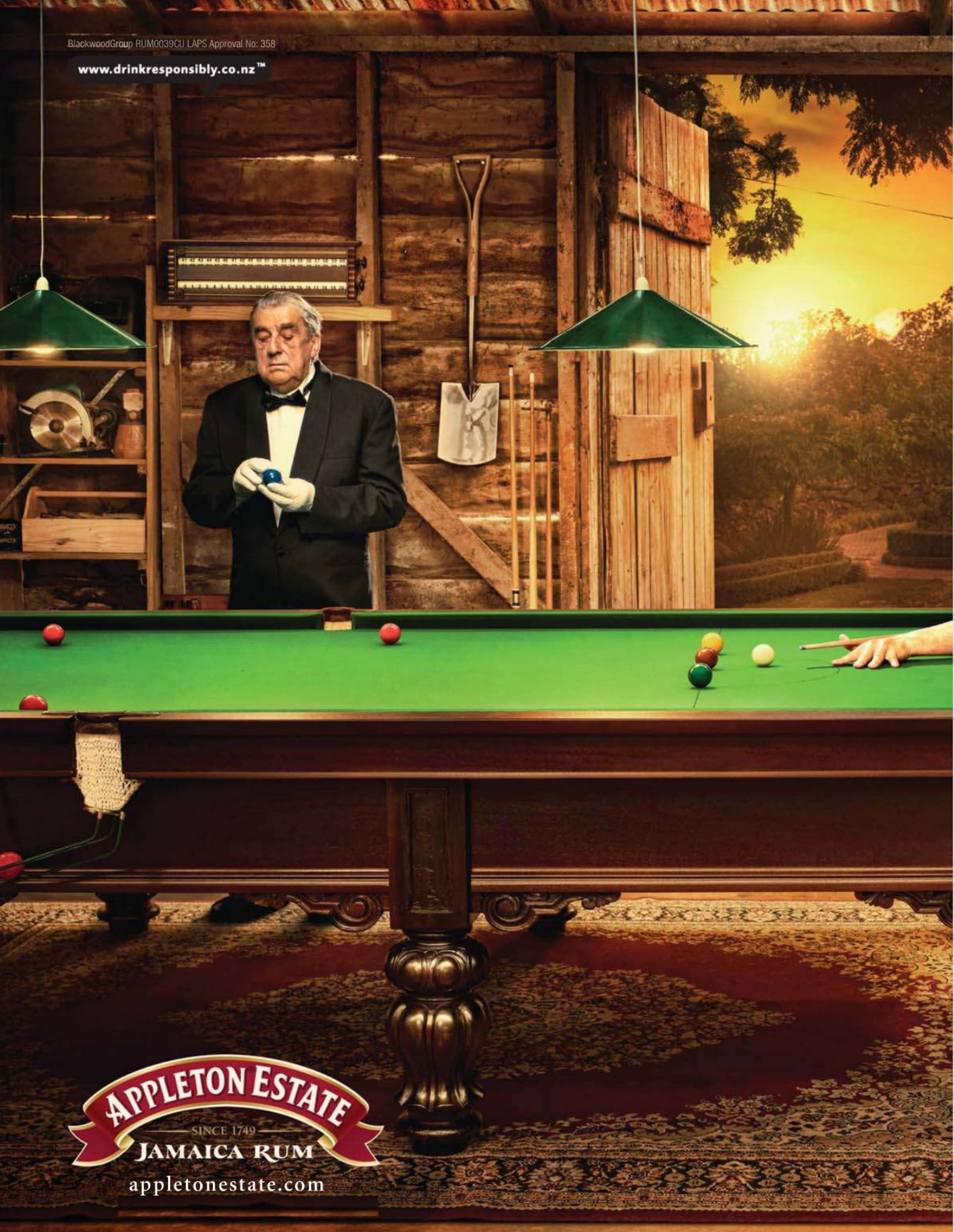


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People often ask if I tire of dining out. I don't - and if I did, I would certainly be in the wrong job. I relish nights at home when I can cook, but I really love eating out, as no two restaurants offer the exact same experience.

This issue, we announce the deserving winners of our *Cuisine* Restaurant of the Year Awards and I want to thank our major sponsor Mercedes-Benz for its ongoing support. It's about saluting New Zealand's very best chefs, restaurateurs and waitstaff who deliver us all those memorable dining moments - exquisite dégustations in elegant rooms, silky house-made pasta in buzzing locals and beautifully cooked produce picked from the garden mere moments before.

On a global scale, New Zealand's food scene punches well above its weight. We are very grateful and we wholeheartedly congratulate the winners, especially our Supreme Winner, Riverstone Kitchen in Oamaru. It's the first time a casual regional eatery has taken out this title and we are thrilled to share this story of pure excellence in a rural area.

Of course, a key factor in the success of our best restaurants is New Zealand's extraordinary produce, with our lamb

being the global poster boy. Delicate spring lamb is superb and you can take advantage of it with Celia Harvey's inspiring recipes. We're also celebrating another of our nation's stars, butter. This much-maligned ingredient can elevate a good dish to greatness in seconds, and the proof's in the pudding with Fiona Smith's glorious butter recipes. Use the leftover butter to make Ginny Grant's stunning cakes and your whole household will be smiling.

Happy eating.

*Sarah*

Sarah Nicholson





# contents

SEPTEMBER 2010 ISSUE 142



## COVER

Design and retouching  
David Thompson, Farrimond  
Photographer Aaron McLean  
Food stylist Fiona Smith  
Spinach & Goat's Cheese Stuffed  
Lamb Rack recipe, page 34

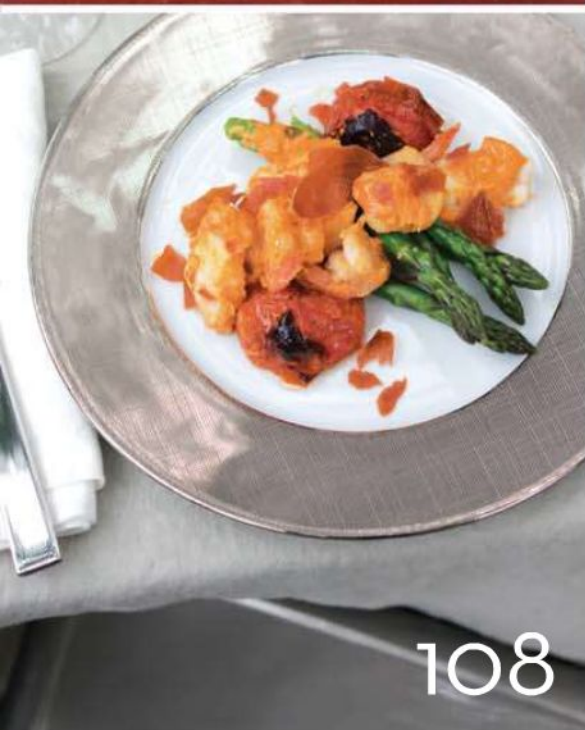
- 9 EDITOR'S LETTER  
14 PEOPLE IN THE ISSUE  
16 LETTERS  
18 We announce the winners  
in the *Cuisine* NZ Restaurant  
of the Year Awards 2010  
31 NEWS & VIEWS  
48 SUBSCRIPTION OFFER  
Win a fabulous Waiheke weekend  
at The Boatshed  
50 QUICK SMART  
Wheats, grains and pulses can  
be stars, too, says Ray McVinnie  
57 BOOKS  
58 READER GIVEAWAY  
Gisborne gourmet weekend
- cuisine food**
- 62 LOVE ME TENDER  
Celia Harvey celebrates the  
sweet taste of spring lamb
- 70 NO BONES ABOUT IT  
Huntin' fishin' Al Brown takes  
meat off the menu  
80 5 OF THE BEST  
Kathy Snowball selects  
her chicken favourites  
90 RISE TO THE OCCASION  
Celebrations and cake are  
made for each other, says  
Ginny Grant  
100 BUTTER BUTTER'S BETTER  
Just a little butter can add so  
much, says Fiona Smith  
108 GREAT ESCAPE  
Ray McVinnie serves a long  
lunch for good friends  
116 PEOPLE'S SQUARE MEALS  
Michal Haines of Farro Fresh  
learnt classic everyday Chinese  
cuisine from her mother  
125 WHAT TO DO WITH  
ZA'ATAR  
126 COURSE YOU CAN DO IT  
Jo Pearson prepares a  
simple three-course meal  
128 THE LAMB THAT TIME  
FORGOT  
Spring lamb has been in  
the shadows too long, says  
David Burton

80





62



108

## cuisine wine

- 133 IN A MERLOT TONE**  
New Zealand Merlot can be dazzling or... confused
- 138 CABERNET FEVER**  
Ralph Kyte-Powell applauds the new breed of New Zealand Cabernet Sauvignon
- 142 HOOK, WINE & SINKER**  
John Saker profiles Akarua winemaker Matt Connell
- 144 A TALE OF THREE HOUSES**  
Champagne's leading lights have stories to tell, says **Toni Mason**



100

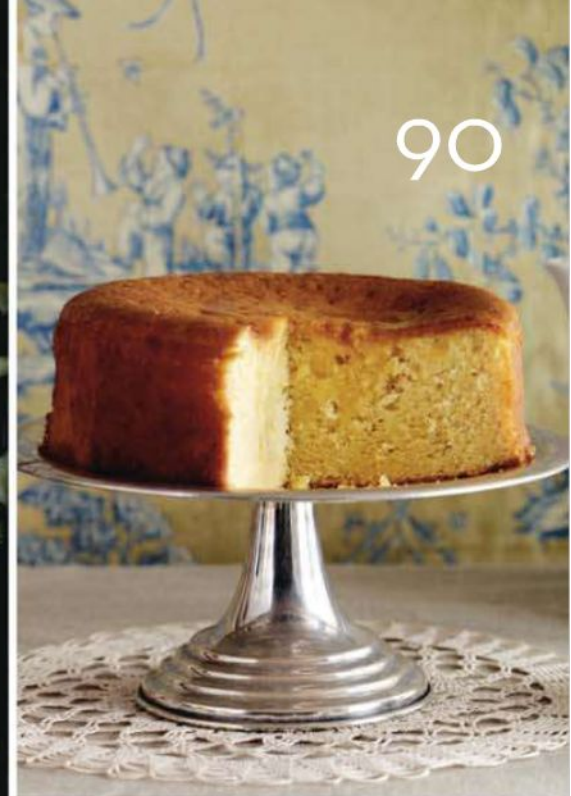
## cuisine travel

- 150 COUP DE TABLE**  
Insider David Prior reveals San Francisco's food revolution
- 158 GISBORNE AGAIN**  
Sophisticated Gisborne charms **David Burton**
- 166 THE VILLAGE, THE PRIEST, THE BAKER & HIS WINDMILL**  
In a valley village in the Corbières **John Saker** sits down to the perfect meal
- 170 AT YOUR REQUEST**
- 175 SHOPPER'S NOTEBOOK**
- 176 CREDITS INDEX**
- 177 RECIPE INDEX**
- 178 LAST BITE**  
**David Burton's** teenage daughter turns vegan



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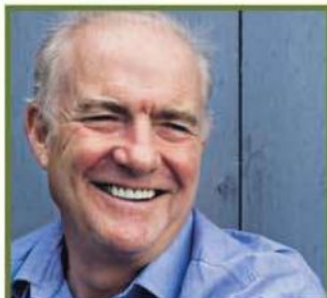
## SOME OF THE CULINARY STARS OF THE SHOWCASE



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PETER GILMORE (SYDNEY)



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## people in the issue

### KERRY TYACK



*Cuisine* Restaurant of the Year head judge Kerry Tyack is a leading New Zealand food and beverage writer, commentator and critic. He has also been involved in just about every significant food and drink competition in the country, from wild foods to gourmet cheese. As he led the judging for this year's competition, Kerry found our

restaurant cuisine in very good heart and was particularly struck by the level of innovation coming out of the regional areas. "For so long we've had sameness around the place," he says, but now regional restaurateurs are "making a real effort to provide points of difference for diners". Kerry lives with his two sons on a small farm to the west of Auckland where they raise cattle and tend a substantial vegetable garden. *Cuisine* Restaurant of the Year Awards, see page 18.

### MICHAL HAINES



Having worked in the food industry for almost 20 years, Michal Haines' particular passion is with ingredients. In her book *Scent of the Monsoon Winds*, released in 2008, she indulges that passion in an evocative look at spices and their combination in dishes from countries across the globe. Michal is also the general manager for Farro Fresh and brings

her background as a chef, cheese and olive oil judge, and food writer to her role there, ensuring those hard-to-find ingredients can be found. Her Chinese heritage has played a large part in her food both in the kitchen and travel-wise and she regards Cantonese as her comfort food of choice. For this issue Michal provides a sampling of everyday Chinese cuisine, though she is the first to admit that it is impossible to talk of a single cuisine when it comes to a land so rich in cultures and diverse in environments. See page 116.

### PRUE RUSCOE



For Australian photographer Prue Ruscoe, returning to San Francisco for this issue's travel feature was no problem at all (see page 150). About eight years ago she spent a lot of time working in the cosmopolitan city of hills and fog, but she admits she saw a different San Francisco this time, as she undertook a culinary odyssey with David Prior.

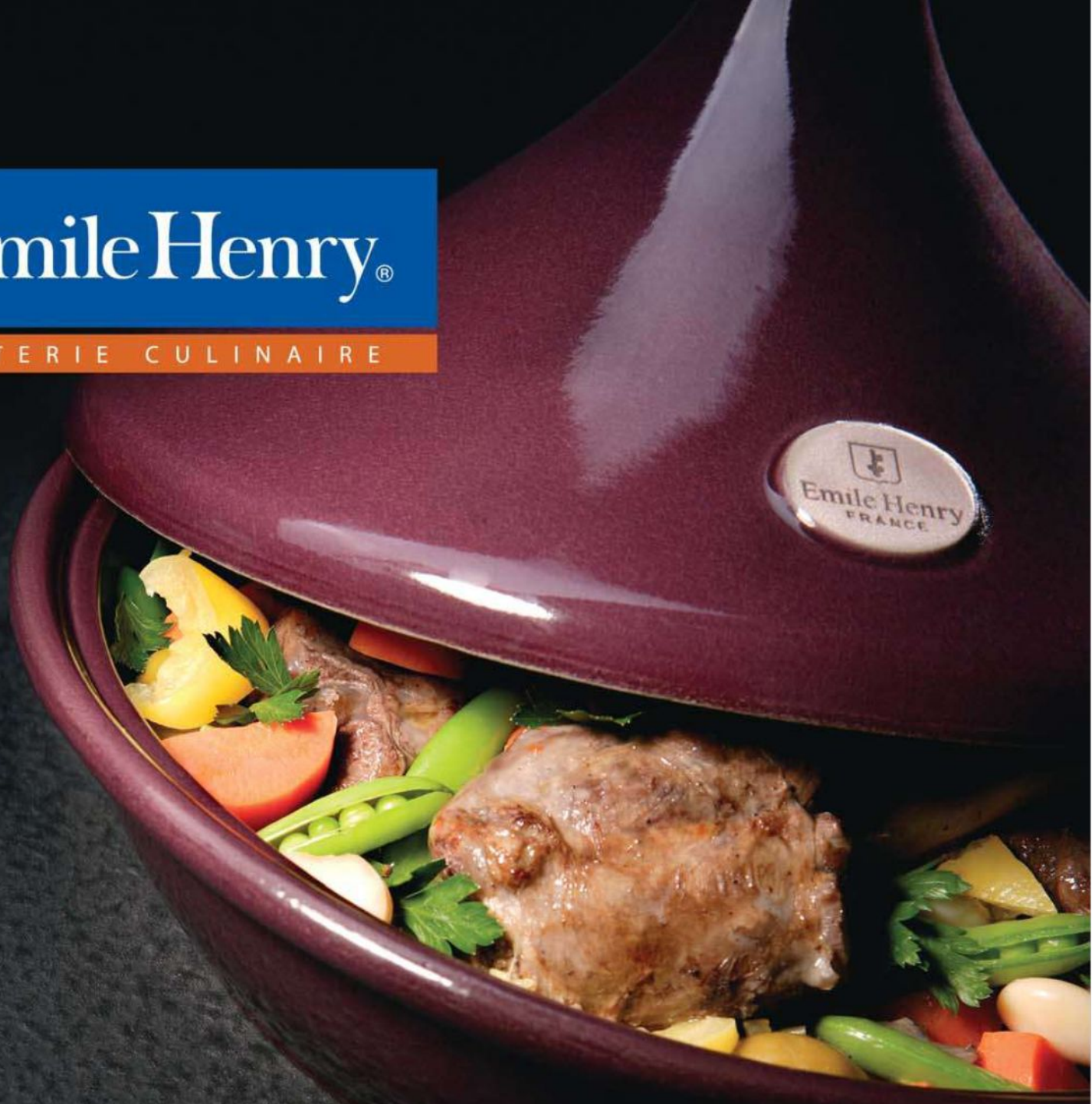
"Returning to such a fabulous food city, and seeing it through an insider's eyes was very inspiring. It must be one of the coolest cities in the world and the growers' markets are something else." Prue was a perfect choice for this multi-faceted mecca, with her freelance portfolio ranging from fashion and beauty for the likes of *Vogue* and *Marie Claire* to interiors, food and lifestyle. Prue also contributed the photographs for Shannon Fricke's sumptuous home style manual *Sense of Style: Colour*.

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## WINNING LETTER

➤ **Marcus Gower** has won a mixed case of The Ned wines – four each of the Sauvignon Blanc 2009, Pinot Gris 2009 and Pinot Noir 2007 (see below).



Over the past few years I have been volunteering in our local community, teaching people about the wonders of good food. *Cuisine* has been a useful tool

➤ Thanks for being such an awesome and inspiring magazine; I've been reading *Cuisine* since it started and when each issue arrives, I can't wait to tear into it and share the yummiest recipes with my friends.

Over the past few years I have been volunteering in our local community, teaching people about the wonders of good food. *Cuisine* has been a useful tool, helping me to show people what to do with herbs, how to prepare quick and simple meals together, and to help spread my enthusiasm about food.

It's always cool to see people going, "Wow! We can make pizza ourselves and it tastes great!"

We are trying to rebuild family links, getting people sitting around a table sharing a meal they have prepared themselves. We have also started a community garden that the local school kids look after and we prepare meals from the produce we harvest.

Hopefully we can spread the news about great food far and wide.

**Marcus Gower, Kihikihi**

➤ I have been a subscriber to *Cuisine* for a number of years, but the July issue was the best yet. I have a baby and a toddler, so I appreciate meals that can be made in a reasonable amount of time, but still taste fantastic and help me try new flavour combinations or ingredients. Kathy Snowball's recipes were particularly well received with the baked pumpkin gnocchi a standout.

**J Evans, via email**

➤ On a chilly Sydney Sunday, it was so great to read Sam Pope's recipes (issue 141). He is indeed a genuinely great, down-to-earth chef who is passionate about what he does. I worked with Sam years ago in Wellington and was so thrilled to see his work in *Cuisine*.

I also loved reading Jane Clifton's tea tirade. I am young, 27, but have a daily tea ritual very similar to Jane's that many of my friends simply cannot understand. I even recently called my grandmother to request a new cosy.

**Karly Weathered, Sydney**

➤ Some four years ago when staying with my daughter in Auckland, I picked up a *Cuisine* off her coffee table. I had never seen the publication before, but when I left a few days later, the mag was safely hidden in my bag. I wanted to try the Assyrian Lamb Racks with Pistachio Couscous (issue 119).

The result of this "theft" was a year's subscription from my daughter for my birthday. I have never needed any incentive to renew my subscription since, so what a wonderful surprise to receive two boxes of Le Creuset cookware in the mail last week, as a winner in your subscription draw.

It will be well used.

**Frank Walsh, Puriri**

➤ I am lucky to have some lovely recipes from my mother in her handwriting. No pictures, just a few simple ingredients, but what great food. I regularly get this folder out and make some of her favourites.

How many people when cleaning out old family homes come across these books tucked away and just throw them out? While you have a chance and the family member is still alive ask about these books. There is often great food in them and fantastic family memories associated with a lot of the recipes.

I will keep buying *Cuisine*, and no doubt more cookbooks, but I will be keeping my mother's folder and one day will give it to one of my three sons.

**Marion Scott, Balclutha**

■ Due to space restrictions, all these letters have been abridged.

## RIVER OF DREAMS

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# Cuisine

## NZ RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR 2010

# WINNERS

**SUPREME  
WINNER**  
RIVERSTONE  
KITCHEN



Bevan and  
Monique Smith

In a year when restaurants and cafés have been dealing with a harsh economic environment, it was gratifying to find the passion and drive that characterise our chefs and waitstaff were as strong as ever. It was also heartening to see an even greater variety of local produce on our plates and more fine New Zealand wines being offered, many by the glass.

We have an enormous pool of culinary talent and it was exciting to see innovative use of ingredients and cooking methods. A highlight was discovering so many fantastic restaurants outside the urban areas.

One niggle we discovered as we toured the country was some indecision with the positioning of some eateries: formal or casual, bistro or café? This is important when it comes to meeting the expectations of diners. We also saw a tendency sometimes to take dishes too far, with too many disparate flavours. And we would like to see more attention to seasoning.

Service on the whole was good, but the winners of this competition stood out for the ability of their waitstaff to show genuine understanding of the menu, a deep appreciation of the wine list and how it worked with the food, and an awareness of what it takes to add real value to the dining occasion.

If what my fellow judges and I have enjoyed is an indication of the quality restaurant diners in New Zealand can expect, then we can all celebrate because the overall standards are, happily, very high indeed.

KERRY TYACK - HEAD JUDGE

Wellington's Logan Brown was ineligible for these awards as co-owner Al Brown is senior food writer at *Cuisine*.

### Partners



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Dining out is an adventure. At its best, it's the closest you'll come to climbing Everest without leaving a table. Driving four hours south from Christchurch, we turned off the highway 12 kilometres north of Oamaru. It was dark and, pulling in between tin sheds, this looked like a good place to dispose of any bodies in the boot.

Riverstone Kitchen revealed itself behind a clutter of garden sculptures, with a vibe that sat somewhere between city bistro and country lodge. We sat on a lounge by the fire with a glass of Central Otago sparkling, although any place with more than 20 New Zealand beers on its wine list is heading in the right direction.

A great restaurant lifts your spirits and transforms you, no matter how jaded you're feeling. Riverstone Kitchen has that knack. It feels like it pours New Zealand's very soul into diners. That's why it's *Cuisine's* Restaurant of the Year. Chef Bevan Smith has something bold to say about what it means to be a Kiwi and does so with élan and wry humour that's everywhere evident, even on the jam labels in the pantry corner. I'm still chuckling over Dot's Picked-at-Night-by-Car-Light Apricot Jam.

His restaurant offers a strong sense of place, matching a rich and sticky ragù of local lamb with gnocchi

equate tricking up what's on the plate with better food. It's not.

If you've got great produce, you don't need to baffle a diner's palate with foams, gels, desiccation and technical frippery. There's nothing wrong per se with such techniques, but use them sparingly, since once the novelty wears off they quickly reveal a chef with little to offer.

A noted exception is The French Café. Despite the deceptive name, Simon Wright's food rises so far above café fare it's worthy of a place on the global stage. This is a staggeringly good restaurant with service to match the kitchen's talent, but my one concern is that its culinary lingua franca means The French Café could fit in anywhere around the planet. That said, New Zealanders should celebrate having it in their backyard.

So what did I learn from tasting some 80 dishes along the length of these two islands? Well, that there's a growing maturity and confidence in Kiwi kitchens. Produce quality is rising to similar heights, as the seafood at Martin Bosley's in Wellington shows. I'd like Te Matuku Bay oysters every day, please.

And I wish more Australian cities the size of Nelson had somewhere of the calibre of Matt and Tania Bouterey's eponymous restaurant,



Guest judge,  
Simon Thomsen

don't and when bread comes with a price tag of up to \$10, it's a rort that will astonish many famished international guests.

Speaking of prices, while there's some great-value food about, there are some settings where surrounds don't justify \$40-plus main courses. And on the wine lists, which generally strike a good balance between playing to home strengths (as you proudly should) and Old World class, the mark-ups can be overly enthusiastic.

I've been crossing the ditch to dine out for several years and have enjoyed seeing New Zealand dining find its feet. Now it's striding ahead with a predominantly European flavour that takes on some Asian accents but,

A great restaurant lifts your spirits and transforms you. Riverstone Kitchen has that knack. It feels like it pours New Zealand's very soul into diners

(potato is a favourite Waitaki Plains crop); and Whitestone's Windsor Blue cheese in a pear salad with Havoc bacon. His wife, Monique, runs the floor with warm professionalism. It's more casual café by day, then morphs into a relaxed yet focused evening restaurant where the food's clean simplicity gives flavours prime place.

New Zealand isn't a tricky place and that's a good thing in a world where the white noise is growing louder. Its people are generous, open and upfront. But if there's one general trend I noticed in my tour of New Zealand's finest, it's a tendency to

which celebrates local producers in dishes such as the Tentation apple assiette. Then there's Shae Moleta's infectious enthusiasm for Mediterranean flavours and wines at Ambeli and the elaborate ambition of Restaurant Schwass. There's breadth and personality emerging as restaurateurs take on the local character.

But to reiterate a key bugbear of my international predecessors, Ralph Kyte-Powell and John Lethlean, in the past two years, what's going on with bread? It's a cornerstone of hospitality. Some get it, but many

most importantly, is trying to answer the question: What does it mean to be a Kiwi cook? Australia has enjoyed a bounty of clever New Zealand expats for some time. Thanks. Bevan Smith was head chef at Brisbane's e'cco bistro for many years. Any chance we can have him back?

● Sydney-based guest judge Simon Thomsen is one of Australasia's most respected critics. A former chef, he has been reviewing for 15 years, including six years as co-editor of *The Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide*. Thomsen is now the critic for *The Daily Telegraph*.





## Riverstone Kitchen



1431 SH1, RD5H, Oamaru,  
ph: 03-431 3505, [riverstonekitchen.co.nz](http://riverstonekitchen.co.nz)  
Thurs-Mon 9am-5pm, Thurs-Sun  
6pm to late

That Riverstone Kitchen won both this category and was named Supreme Winner is an outstanding achievement for a restaurant from well beyond the urban borders.

Bevan and Monique Smith and their team succeed on every level. Having moved back to New Zealand around six years ago (Bevan was head chef at acclaimed Brisbane bistro e'cco), they set out to make wholesome meals with great taste and wide appeal. They have achieved so much more than that.

Riverstone Kitchen is a more casual café by day before morphing into a relaxed yet focused evening restaurant.

Bevan's beautifully cooked food is sophisticatedly simple, with subtle rubs and well-thought-out combinations of flavours - no fussy garnishes here.

The short, uncluttered menu focuses on local ingredients, with much of the produce from the family's gardens. It is a wonderful showcase for what makes New Zealand cuisine special. As one judge put it: "Everything was so beautifully cooked and composed, it was just a joy."

The staff, overseen by Monique, are engaging and personable, while at all times efficient and professional.

There is no tension at Riverstone Kitchen, no airs and graces, no promises that cannot be delivered and the attention to the smallest detail by all the staff is remarkable.

And, amidst all the care and attention, there is a great deal of fun present at Riverstone Kitchen, a place where the kids have their own special area, where fires warm in winter and al fresco dining is encouraged in warmer months. It really is the total package.

"There was a graciousness to the whole experience," said guest judge Simon Thomsen. "You can't help but leave with a glow."







## Palate ★★★★★

170 Victoria St, Hamilton,  
ph: 07-834 2921, [palaterestaurant.co.nz](http://palaterestaurant.co.nz)  
Dinner Tues-Sat

The judges described their meal at Palate as “a seamless performance from start to finish, one that cannot be rated too highly”. Well deserved praise for chef-owner Mat McLean and his winning approach, with his ever-evolving menu of five starters, five mains and five desserts that sit alongside each other, so that every dinner is a memorable experience of complementary dishes.

Palate is modestly placed in the main street of Hamilton. The décor is comfortable, warm and friendly, the ambience always inviting. But where it succeeds best is in the thoughtful seasonality of McLean's menu, his use

of local products and the quality of his ingredients. There is no compromise in this kitchen and it shows. Portion sizes are well judged, timing is perfect and the flavour and textural combinations thoughtful and memorable.

One judge thought the entrée of seared yellowfin tuna and calamari with papaya salad and furakaki was inspired, while a divine main of Jerusalem artichoke agnolotti with a Niçoise of roast tomatoes was superbly matched with Neudorf Pinot Gris.

Special mention needs to be made of the staff, who add extra panache to an already rewarding experience – in fact, Arihia Tahere-Manconi was one of the standout waitstaff in the competition. The wine list with thoughtful options to suit the menu completes the picture. Palate is a standout.



## Shae Moleta

Ambeli, Wellington

He has a sparkle in his eye and can turn on a wry smile. His welcome is effusive but never disingenuous, his repartee intelligent and quirky. Underpinning his rascalion approach is a thorough knowledge of his menu, his wine list and his customer. He is a true host, using his passion positively to add a generous extra serving of enjoyment to your visit.

Moleta, with his wife Elisavet George, owns and hosts Ambeli in Wellington (see page 25). Born in New Zealand, he has a smorgasbord of ethnicities in his background, oodles of Mediterranean charm and, as guest judge Simon Thomsen said, he knows the wine list better than his own mother.

When it comes to service, his is perfectly pitched, never perfunctory; he notices the little things and attends to them. The Moleta way is modulated, professional and engaging. He listens to you, carefully, but is not averse to a bit of banter. But where others deliver all show and no substance, Shae brings warmth, understanding and a huge slice of satisfaction.

It was an absolute pleasure to have him “take us into the woods” and share with us his undeniable pride in his award-winning restaurant.





Gareth Stewart  
and Geeling Ching



**BEST  
CASUAL  
DINING**  
METROPOLITAN  
WINNER

## Soul Bar & Bistro

★★★★★

Viaduct Harbour, ph: 09-356 7249,  
soulbar.co.nz

7 days 11am to late

How much do we love Soul? Let us count the ways. First, there's weekend brunch on the terrace overlooking the Viaduct Harbour, watching the tourists perusing menus at the cluster of eateries here. "Pick this one!" you want to call out across your plate of curried Spanish rice with smoked hapuku, poached egg and coriander.

Soul is also the kind of place created for long lunches. Whether it's the smart set, business crowd or families, the wide-ranging menu has broad appeal, including catering well for vegetarians.

The harbour setting inspires seafood choices and chef Gareth Stewart's menu never disappoints, with dishes such as perfectly tender salt and

pepper squid with almond skordalia, but he also shows flair with dishes such as the duck with kumara and maple purée that judges found beautifully cooked and seasoned.

Plus, the ever-popular bar area, which never encroaches on the dining, comes with its own appealing menu, too.

Geeling Ching, long-time operations manager, runs front of house like the professional she is and it's clear staff training is a priority - service comes with a smile and is incredibly efficient. They deliver expert guidance throughout the whole experience.

It will be no surprise to many that Soul has taken out this category for the second consecutive year in these awards. Owner Judith Tabron is a slick operator and Soul has been one of New Zealand's best dining experiences for many years - and we anticipate for many more to come.



**BEST  
CASUAL  
DINING**  
METROPOLITAN  
RUNNER-UP

## Ponsonby Road Bistro ★★★★★

165 Ponsonby Rd, Ponsonby,  
ph: 09-360 1611,

ponsonbyroadbistro.co.nz

Dinner Mon-Sat, lunch Mon-Fri

When the clever crew from Ponsonby favourite Rocco opened this eatery as Ponsonby Road Bistro in 2009, they captured the zeitgeist of well-priced bistros and did it with style and aplomb. Everything on the crowd-pleasing menu is under \$30 (steak aside), the wine list is a cut above (and we like that you can get 500ml carafes), and the fit-out has an air of urbane cool with a welcoming vibe from the engaging staff.

Co-owner Melissa Morrow takes charge out front in the busy dining room, and her enthusiasm for good food and an eye for interesting wines keeps this bistro ahead of the pack.

The private-club feel puts you instantly at ease once installed on a banquette and perusing chef Sarah Conway's handwritten menu that may consist of freshly shucked oysters, house-made charcuterie plate, pizzas, sardines with preserved orange butter, pine nuts and currants; and roast lamb rump with quinoa tabbouleh.

Thankfully you can book, but last-minute hopefuls can pull up a stool at the room's central bar to enjoy a drink.

We love it because it's lots of fun. And sometimes that might just be the most important thing.





Simon Wright and  
Cregan Molloy-Wright

This restaurant sets the benchmark for fine dining  
in New Zealand and deserves that recognition

## The French Café

★★★★★

210 Symonds St, ph: 09-377 1911,  
thefrenchcafe.co.nz

Dinner Tues-Sat, lunch Fri

Guest judge Simon Thomsen summed it up: "The French Café could hold its own anywhere in the world. It excelled across the board and I was absolutely wowed by it."

The dining room, the service and chef Simon Wright's food exude quality, consistency and class. It is no surprise this is the most-awarded restaurant in the country and that every top honour has been bestowed on it at some time in the 11 years Wright and partner Cregan Molloy-Wright have been bringing their unique talents to the table.

The judges without exception acknowledged the quality of the menu, with one commenting that this "is seriously good food that clearly comes

from a superbly talented and managed kitchen". Wright's artful dishes feature his signature roast duck and the judges tried a spanner crab and pearl barley risotto that sang of the sea, plus exquisite desserts such as the baked Meyer lemon tart with blueberries, candied lemon, Italian meringue and incredible cassis sorbet.

The wine list offers an extensive and wonderfully eclectic selection and the staff are deeply committed to their craft, working seamlessly with the kitchen to provide a totally consistent and reliable experience.

It's a rare pleasure to sit in the back dining room and watch the streamlined performance in the open kitchen, though we love the bar area, too, where you get the same care.

The French Café sets the benchmark for fine dining in New Zealand and deserves that recognition.



Martin Bosley

## Martin Bosley's

★★★★★

Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club,  
103 Oriental Parade, ph: 04-920 8302,  
martin-bosley.com Lunch Tues-Fri,  
dinner Tues-Sun

Martin Bosley's waterfront restaurant is one of New Zealand's most brilliant seafood experiences and the elegant dining room with its expansive views over Wellington Harbour provides just the right atmosphere.

The 2007 Supreme Winner of this competition, chef-patron Martin Bosley's clear mastery is always evident. He is constantly looking to innovate, but never resorts to culinary gimmicks or trends. Instead he uses well-honed classical techniques to bring out the best in top-quality ingredients. Plus, he has the confidence to offer his seafood both simply and boldly, such as clams with XO butter, and grilled fish with béarnaise, red wine sauce and onion rings.

Simply, the judges were wowed, one describing a main of snapper as "possibly the best I have eaten".

The waitstaff are polished and extremely knowledgeable, and the extensive wine list is studded with local stars. An altogether finely honed performance all round.





Matt Bouterey



This restaurant shines in the exceptional food prepared in the remarkably serene open kitchen

## Bouterey's ★★★★★

251 Queen St, Richmond,  
ph: 03-544 1114, [boutereys.co.nz](http://boutereys.co.nz)

Dinner Tues-Sat

Here's proof that you don't need to be on a main urban stage to do great things. One judge described the food at Matt and Tania Bouterey's eponymous restaurant as being "easily the equal of, and in most cases better than, any of its metropolitan contemporaries".

The large space has been fitted out to provide great comfort, but where this restaurant really shines is in the exceptional standard of food - prepared in the remarkably serene open kitchen - and the delivery. Matt Bouterey is shrewd enough to know being close to the source of great produce gives him a head start, which he elevates to greatness with precise, elegant, yet hearty cooking, ably supported by

a competent staff of young protégés.

Together they create dishes that burst with texture and flavour. The wonderful menu of eclectic dishes has something for everyone, whether it's duck confit with truffled celeriac, sticky lentils and raspberry vinaigrette, or a nod to a Kiwi classic in the chilli-smoked mussel and salmon cake with crisp prawns.

The Boutereys' passion for local produce and suppliers is evident both on the plate and on the menu's back page. The wine list also has a parochial leaning, but certainly doesn't lack balance. Hawke's Bay and Australia are well represented and a cellar selection of older, rarer wines is excellent. By-the-glass options have been selected with flair. The wonderfully down-to-earth waitstaff are both engaging and efficient.



Brenton Low

## à Deco ★★★★★

70 Kamo Rd, Kensington, Whangarei,  
ph: 09-459 4957

Dinner Tues-Sat, lunch Fri

A master of the understatement, chef-patron Brenton Low delivers a superb menu, prepared with classic finesse and contemporary flair.

Inside the 1930s former private residence, stylishly refurbished in a manner befitting the art deco period, is a dining room full of style and élan. The thoroughly efficient kitchen turns out a menu that is easy to follow and so well orchestrated that each dish smoothly follows its predecessor.

Lunchtime dining from a choice of two set menus is very popular. But it is dinner that presents Low's skills at their best, making for a memorable experience from start to finish. Along with this goes the admirable use of local seafood wherever possible. Line-caught snapper often appears, maybe with tea-smoked salmon and organic risotto, perhaps a Kaipara mussel beignet. And the South Island salmon four ways is a firm favourite on the menu.

The wine list pays due homage to local wineries but is supplemented by wines from around the country, many of which are offered by the glass. Staff are welcoming and eager to please.

À Deco is a true star in Northland.



Sam Pope



Everyone should be blessed with a  
neighbourhood restaurant like this

## Ambeli ★★★★★

18 Majoribanks St, Mount Victoria,  
ph: 04-385 7577, [theambeli.co.nz](http://theambeli.co.nz)  
Dinner Tues-Sat (lunch by arrangement)

The floor creaks, loudly in places, the décor is unlikely to feature in *Trends* magazine and the maître d's uniform is, well, quirky. Yet there is something wonderfully honest, worthy and pleasurable about Ambeli.

The atmosphere in this former settler's cottage is relaxed, the menu is simple and as quirky as host Shae Moleta's fondness for off-the-cuff backchat, and the wine list simply impressive. So much so that he is our Restaurant Personality of the Year.

Chef Sam Pope is the son of a travel guide writer and in creating his repertoire, he enjoys the advantage of a boyhood spent camping and

eating around the Mediterranean. His timeless approach to this cuisine is reassuring, evocative and deeply flavoursome, but the theme where Italian meets Spanish meets Greek is consistent, though some creative and contemporary touches hint of fusion.

Judges loved the ever-popular wafer-thin, crisp galette, described on the menu as a potato pancake, which comes sprinkled with capers, the finest anchovies and pecorino.

The Jerusalem artichoke soup with its garnish of fresh feather-light chorizo was perfectly seasoned while the fish was delicate and delightful. The desserts were a highlight – simple in concept and beautifully prepared.

We loved Ambeli. Everyone should be blessed with a neighbourhood restaurant like this where frequent visits are a must.

Jeremy Schmid



## Two Fifteen Bistro & Wine Bar ★★★★★

215 Dominion Rd, Mt Eden,  
ph: 09-630 6474, [twofifteen.co.nz](http://twofifteen.co.nz)  
Dinner Tues-Sat, lunch Fri

Two Fifteen chef-patron and charcuterie specialist Jeremy Schmid is the man behind Little Boys sausages – and so popular are these that sometimes fans call in during dinner service to buy them from the front desk. He and his team also cure meats and make almost everything, from the bread and pasta to quince paste, as well as cold-smoking Akaroa salmon. Slices of delicious, sweet, air-dried pork feature in salads, as do his chorizo and air-dried beef.

However, it's the market fish on a prawn and herb risotto that the growing legion of regulars demand stays on – according to Schmid, some order little else.

Schmid worked in Britain and Switzerland before returning to New Zealand and heading up other people's kitchens. This cosy bistro is his first solo venture. The wine list has been designed with a good spread of New Zealand varietals and a number of international drops, and, like the food, has been thoughtfully priced, which can only encourage return visits.







We applaud the authentic menu –  
no amorphous “Italian” found here

## O'Sarracino ★★★★★

3-5 Mt Eden Rd, Eden Terrace,  
ph: 09-309 3740, [osarracino.co.nz](http://osarracino.co.nz)  
Dinner Tues-Sat

This Neapolitan restaurant has for its home a former funeral parlour. But it has been transformed into a spacious, elegant dining room adorned with black and white family photos – the perfect understated backdrop to the authentic menu. You won't find the often-amorphous “Italian” here.

Chef-patron Gaetano Spinosa, whose family hails from Naples, has focused his menu on the food of his heritage. The dishes are generous in size and flavour, and the unfussy presentation belies the great skill in the kitchen.

The antipasti platters are especially good – laden with marinated seafood, cheese, cured meats, and moreish

casatiello, Neapolitan cheesy bread peppered with slivers of salami. Signature pastas include the hearty paccheri (large tubes of pasta) with ragù Napolitano where the chunky steak is braised for six hours – a recipe Spinosa inherited from his grandmother.

Naturally, you'll find prosecco and grappa on the concise Italian wine list.

There's genuine pride here. Dare to leave anything on your plate and they want to know if you are unhappy; ask about an ingredient and a sample soon appears from the kitchen. Tell them you like something and a variation of the dish appears at your table.

The service is mostly attentive and well modulated. We applaud the regional approach to Italian cuisine and the cheerful, fun atmosphere. You too will leave O'Sarracino smiling.

Mark Limacher



## Ortega Fish Shack & Bar ★★★★★

16 Majoribanks St, Mount Victoria,  
ph: 04-382 9559, [ortega.co.nz](http://ortega.co.nz)  
Mon-Sat 5.30pm to late

Ortega Fish Shack and Bar is the latest project of Mark Limacher, one of New Zealand's best chefs. Set in a renovated villa in the lee of Mount Victoria, it has attracted a large cohort of regulars, including many locals.

Limacher is ably joined by head chef Peter Collins, who also filled the role at Limacher's former Café Bastille, once on this site. They offer a menu that changes according to daily availability. So you may find squid with Lisbon sausage, or raw big-eye tuna and salmon with avocado and tamari lime dressing.

The dining area has been given a wittily kitsch maritime-themed makeover to match the menu and the casually chic atmosphere, while the service is youthful and energetic.

The largely local (and well-priced) wine list is organised by mouthfeel – crisp or fat whites, juicy or big reds – and great sherries are also offered as matches. And in French fashion, cheeseboards are served then weighed when you finish, so you pay by the gram – a simple sophistication that sums up Ortega's worldly, grown-up approach. It's no wonder they usually play to a full house. And while this is a fish restaurant, we would hate to see Limacher's famous sirloin steak with Café de Paris butter, disappear from among the seafood mains.





Oliver Jackson

## Pegasus Bay Winery

★★★★★

263 Stockgrove Rd, Amberley,  
ph: 03-314 6869, [pegasusbay.com](http://pegasusbay.com)  
7 days 12pm-4pm (closed July)

Our judges offered the highest praise for this Waipara Valley restaurant, describing one visit as simply flawless. New Zealand boasts an abundance of excellent winery restaurants, but Pegasus Bay, co-winner of this category in 2009 after winning the previous year, has again outdone them all.

Chef Oliver Jackson's menu showcases excellent South Island produce, including ingredients from the kitchen garden, and he prepares them with flair and imagination for guests from all over the world.

Star dishes include a delicately thin but full-flavoured black truffle, taleggio, parmesan and chive frittata; perfectly cooked North Canterbury lamb cutlets

with salsa verde, cannellini beans and harissa vinaigrette, and crisp-skinned Marlborough salmon with celeriac purée and green-olive tapenade.

Waipara wine pioneers Ivan and Christine Donaldson have kept this a family business, with several of their children now involved. They keep their property beautifully maintained - the large garden is a picture-perfect spot for lunch, with a lawn that rolls down to meet a lake (concerts are staged in the natural amphitheatre here). Indoors, the spacious, high-ceilinged room is just as welcoming and you can lounge on red-leather couches around an open fire.

The exclusively Pegasus Bay wine list has a significant selection of vintages. The obliging, professional team, skilfully led by Belinda Donaldson, are able to expertly suggest matches to the food to complete the experience.



## Black Barn Bistro

★★★★★

Black Barn Rd, Havelock North,  
ph: 06-877 7985, [blackbarn.com](http://blackbarn.com)  
Lunch Wed-Sun \$\$\$

Black Barn Vineyards' stylish dining room is only open for lunch, but where other venues take a more casual approach at this time of day, the menu at Black Barn offers expertly prepared and attractively presented dishes in the style of a high-quality dinner service.

The tight menu has a country charm, with dishes varying from braised wild rabbit to venison osso buco.

Presentation is of a high standard and our judges were impressed with the generous use of local ingredients and the appealing seasonality in the approach to dish design. A highlight was a delicious chicken breast and chicken leg with pumpkin risotto and quince drizzle that showed great technique and considerable flair.

Unsurprisingly, the wine list favours Black Barn wines, with a good selection by the glass, along with an impressive cellar list of alternatives. Service is polished and polite, with staff well informed on the region.

Black Barn reflects the heart of Hawke's Bay with its sense of style, its support of local produce, wine and art. Not surprisingly, it has a high number of regulars. ☼







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*Elliott Erwitt*

# LIVE IN ITALIAN





# news&views



## Coffee goes beyond the steam age

Wellington coffee roaster Coffee Supreme has opened Customs Brew Bar, a nostalgic 1950s Modernist retail bean shop and café at 39 Ghuznee St, and only one of the four in-house brewing options is espresso.

To be sure, Customs has one of only two Slayer espresso machines in the country, a gleaming, bespoke beast from Seattle that allows the barista to crank up steam pressure during extraction. But to really taste the subtleties of the high-end single-origin beans, says Coffee Supreme's Justin McArthur, it is recommended you choose one of the filter options.

"Never apologise for using a plunger at home," says McArthur. "It makes beautiful coffee."

Customs Brew Bar has nine single-origin beans on offer and the brewing method can be customised to the particular bean. You can choose the classic Chemex – a glass beaker with a paper filter – or you could go for the gold-plated filter, gold being neutral in flavour.

But most excitingly, Customs Brew Bar has a Clover. The complex machine works like a reverse French press and was going to be coffee's The Next Big Thing four or five years ago – before Starbucks bought the company and withdrew it from sale. **DAVID BURTON**



## A ZEST FOR LIMONCELLO



Corrado Ronchetti descends from aristocrats on both sides of his family, but that never stopped his grandmother making limoncello like any other householder. Corrado, who grew up in Naples, recalls how she would use lemons from the nearby Amalfi Coast – big easy-peel lemons with a puffy skin, prized for its oily zest. He couldn't find such a lemon on the Kapiti Coast, but in all other respects, he says, his Soprano Limoncello is just like his nonna used to make.

It has only recently been registered as a commercial product, but Corrado and his wife Annemarie Tiffen have been making their own for 15 years and giving away the sweet, syrupy digestif as a goodwill gesture in the seven Italian restaurants they have owned around greater Wellington. Currently, they own and run Soprano Ristorante in Paraparaumu.

Corrado substitutes Yen Ben lemons from Gisborne for the Amalfi lemons of home, but, even so, his limoncello is probably a little better than his

grandmother's since, unlike grannie, he doesn't buy in the base alcohol (or want a bar of the whey alcohol often used in New Zealand). Rather, he and Annemarie distil it themselves in their Paraparaumu processing room, using fermented dextrose.

Then, with the radio going, Corrado patiently peels 60 kilos of lemons by hand, with a domestic potato peeler, avoiding the bitter white pith that sometimes taints limoncello made with commercial peeling machines. The zest (and only the zest, mind – the lemon juice is not used) is steeped in the alcohol, which is then mixed with sugar syrup. The bright yellow that eventuates is entirely natural, unlike certain industrial limoncellos.

Recently, the Ronchettis were dining at a restaurant in Khandallah, when Corrado asked the maître d' if they had any limoncello. "Yes, we have the very best," replied the maître d', not knowing who Corrado was, and presented him with one of his own bottles. [sopranolimoncello.co.nz](http://sopranolimoncello.co.nz)

DAVID BURTON

Royal VKB's slow cookers offer great versatility: the two terracotta parts can be flipped to take large or small meals and the stackable silicone rings protect your table. [royalvkb.com](http://royalvkb.com)



## Pukka hapuku

The world's first farmed hapuku made its public debut at Logan Brown restaurant in Wellington recently, as chef Al Brown and his team put the fish through its paces for invited guests – raw, poached, smoked, tempura-battered and pan-roasted.

It has taken NIWA scientists six years to bring the fish to this stage. Using chinook salmon as their model, they targeted hapuku (groper) as a culinarily versatile fish with high-end appeal. Their first challenge was to get this deep-water species to adjust to the pressure difference of surface ponds, after which the scientists took it every step through the life process, finally nurturing it to the stage where it was comfortable enough to spawn.

The intention is to harvest hapuku at a standard 20 to 24 months, giving



chefs access to fish of a consistent size, taste and texture all year round.

NIWA CEO John Morgan said it still had some intensive research ahead, but the scientists at the Bream Bay facility believed they were on target to see commercial farming by 2012.

And the verdict of the guests? While some felt wild hapuku had a slightly stronger flavour, in all other ways the pampered hapuku from the farm came out on top – especially its creamy texture and its fat content, which yielded an exceptionally crisp skin.

DAVID BURTON

## WE FANCY



The slices at Auckland's **The Food Room** – made with real butter and you can order them on the internet to pick up. The sandwiches and gourmet pies are great, too. [thefoodroom.co.nz](http://thefoodroom.co.nz)

The new Seville orange-infused **Sweet Olive Oil Tortas** from Inés Rosales. These crisp traditional olive oil cakes have been made the same way for a century from olive oil, flour, sesame and aniseed. A real Andalusian treat for any time of day. Available from Sabato. [sabato.co.nz](http://sabato.co.nz)

The Quinoa Super Salad and Thai Green Curry from **Tasty Pot Co.** Available in most upper North Island supermarkets.





As head chef at Logan Brown, Shaun Clouston knows all about balancing work with the demands of a young family – daughter Emma is aged four years, while his son William is just over four weeks.

Shaun still oversees the daily food preparation at Logan Brown, but currently does only two evening services a week. Meanwhile, he and his wife Rebecca, also a trained chef, are training Emma to eat as they eat, by letting her choose what goes into her tortilla wrap – even if it's telegraph cucumber at the winter price of \$3.95! The next night it might be quesadillas made with the leftover tortillas, cheese, ham and more vegetables.

Such fare may seem a far cry from a fine-dining restaurant, yet one of Shaun's maxims is that perfection is reached when there's nothing left to take away, and a trademark of Logan Brown has always been well-defined flavours, free of unnecessary elaboration – even if only the best, high-end ingredients are used, such as South Island beech-dew honey at \$100 a kilo.

Raised and trained in Whanganui, Shaun moved to Wellington to help open Logan Brown. After three years as sous chef, however, he felt the need to travel. So when Rebecca lost her job in 2000, Sydney beckoned and three weeks later they were gone. "It was meant to be," says Shaun.

After four years at La Grillade, an upscale Sydney steakhouse, he shifted to Wildfire, Aucklander Tonci Farac's restaurant on Circular Quay. This included a stint at the sister restaurant next door, Ocean Room, where Shaun gained the respect of the all-Japanese kitchen brigade by arriving at work before them and leaving after. Hence, he was let into a few Japanese secrets, such as flounder basket salad: the flounder frame is separated and deep-fried to make it crunchy and edible, while tempura is made of the fillets, the whole fish then reconstructed and served over salad. Finally came the day when Steve Logan and Al Brown flew over to Sydney for lunch at Wildfire and made Shaun an offer he couldn't refuse. ❖ DAVID BURTON

**BUFFALO EFFECT** There's more to buffalo milk cheese than mozzarella say Annie Wills and Phil Armstrong of Whangaripo Buffalo Company. And judging by the range of cheese they produce, they're right.

Buffalo milk produces quite delicate flavours and their cheeses reflect this. Marin Blue has a mild blue flavour which sharpens with age, but is not overly creamy, with a welcome firm mouthfeel. The pecorino-style Saint Malo has a slight salty, pineapple flavour that should develop nicely over time. The fresher buffalo cheeses: a brie and a fresca (a peasant-style), as well as their labneh (made from yoghurt), are all wonderfully smooth and creamy.

Phil and Annie imported their herd two years ago from Queenstown and have 17 cows, two bulls and 24 young stock at present.

After their second child arrived in the middle of setting up the company, Annie handed the cheesemaking over to Sue Arthur at Over the Moon Dairy, but is set to take over, something she is very excited about.

Find Whangaripo cheese at Matakana Farmers' Market and Farro Fresh in Auckland (farrofresh.co.nz).

❖ FIONA SMITH







## RAISING THE BAR

The **Raspberry Haven** at Wanaka's Uno Wine Bar – a smart venue overlooking the lake – is a luscious mix of Amaretto, Chambord, raspberries and sugar syrup, muddled, shaken and garnished with mint. Created by co-owner Steve Prescott's daughter Helen, it's like a dessert tart in a glass.

## Spinach & Goat's Cheese Stuffed Lamb Rack

### SERVES 6

150g spinach,  
stems trimmed  
200g chèvre  
(creamy goat's cheese)  
grated zest of 1 lemon  
2 x 6-rib racks of lamb  
salt and freshly ground  
black pepper  
½ loaf sourdough bread,  
crusts removed  
40g butter, cubed  
1 tablespoon finely  
chopped rosemary

Preheat the oven to 220°C. Bring a saucepan of water to the boil. Add the spinach and cook until just wilted. Drain and refresh in cold water. Squeeze out excess moisture and chop finely. Mix with the chèvre and lemon zest.

Partially slice the meat away from the bones by cutting down next to the ribs, being careful not to cut the ribs off. Open out the meat, place the spinach mix down the centre then fold the meat back over. Season with salt and pepper and place on a baking tray.



## Al Brown's Good Oil

Al Brown has launched two olive oils, made by Village Press from Koroneiki olives: a 500ml bottle of lemon-and-fennel-infused oil that's fantastic with fish and a one-litre Bag n Box. "Just throw it in the back of the car and take it camping" says Al. Available everywhere Village Press olive oils are sold.

## THE COASTER'S CLEAR

These striking hand-printed coasters by Jill Butler are just the thing to dress up long spring drinks. Available from The Poi Room. [thepoiroom.co.nz](http://thepoiroom.co.nz)



**LARDON CALLING** The distinctive rich, salty flavour and crunch that lardons add to food is unique. Which is why we're so happy leading chef Peter Gordon and Beehive bacon have teamed up to produce the Beehive Craft Series. As well as lardons (those versatile thick pieces of salt-cured pork), the new range, which uses free-farmed pork, also includes maple and nutmeg bacon, twice-cooked five-spice pork belly and Cajun marinated pork ribs. Available in supermarkets. Beehive Craft Series by Peter Gordon is available from the butchery and chilled meats sections of your local supermarket from the 25th August. **FIONA SMITH**

COVER RECIPE, AARON MCLEAN; COCKTAIL, KIERAN SCOTT; COASTERS, JASON CREAGHAN



In a food processor, blend the bread to crumbs then add the butter and rosemary, and process until well mixed. Press this mixture on top of the lamb.

Roast for 20 minutes then let rest for 5 minutes before carving. Serve with a spring salad and lamb jus.

**FIONA SMITH**

Thanks to the following suppliers: Microgreens, Juponica Gardens; baby vegetables, Fresh Connection ([freshconnection.co.nz](http://freshconnection.co.nz)); herbs, Scarborough Fare







## DARK SIDE OF THE APPLE

Black never goes out of fashion, but in New York this season, it's turning up in an unexpected place: on the dinner plate. All over Manhattan, chefs are adding black ingredients to dishes to create memorable meals.

"You eat with your eyes before you eat with your mouth," says Justin Bogle, executive chef at two-Michelin-starred Gilt. Bogle dresses his turbot with a sprinkling of black leek ash and adorns a slow-cooked egg with a black olive chip (made from puréed olives and squid ink, dehydrated for two days).

Up in West Harlem, at Smoke Jazz & Supper Club, chef Patricia Williams flavours her crostini with ricotta, broad beans and a clove of charcoal-coloured garlic. Delmonico's, an old-school restaurant near Wall St, has grilled lamb chops with

jet-coloured chickpeas on its menu. And in the chichi dining room of The Plaza Hotel, black trumpet mushrooms are added to a plate of lobster meat and sautéed fresh corn, then dressed tableside with lobster broth, for a striking bisque.

### "Frankly, it's cool to serve hard-to-get ingredients"

At Klee, chef Daniel Angered is serving duck liver dressed with black walnuts (poached in milk and sweet-pickled with bay leaf and coriander). "Frankly, it's cool to serve hard-to-get ingredients," he says.

✱ **KIRSTEN MATTHEW**  
giltnewyork.com, smokejazz.com,  
delmonicosny.com, theplaza.com,  
kleebrasserie.com

## TRAFFIC

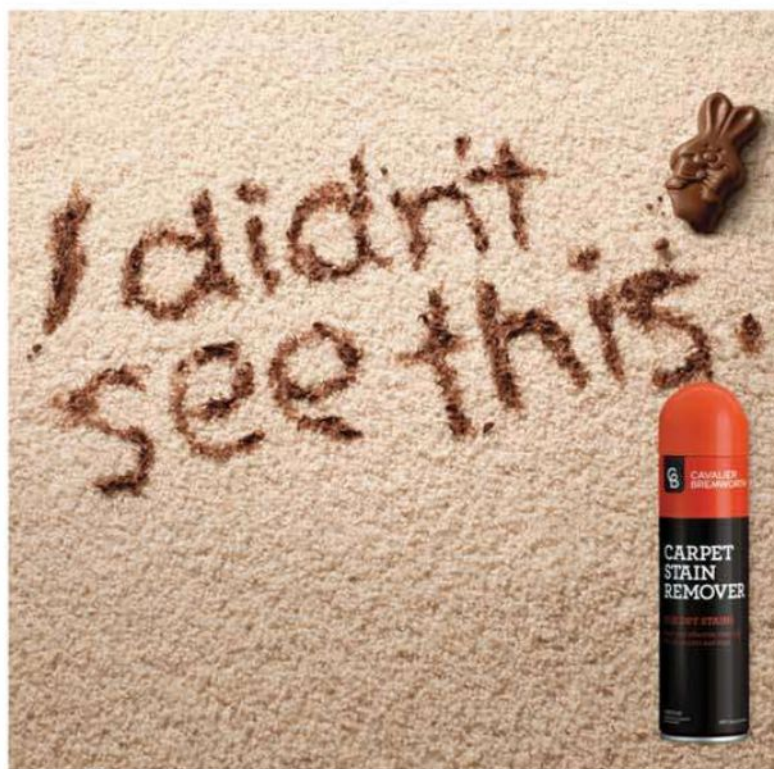


Lyttelton has another restaurant in busy London St. **LONDON ST BAR & GRILL** has opened at what was formerly London St Bistro, which had been closed for some months. The new restaurateur is Stan Wayne.

Central Otago preserves queens Jane Shaw and Pauline Murphy of **PROVISIONS OF CROMWELL** have opened a new café-artisan bakery-store in Arrowtown at 65 Buckingham St. The restored miner's cottage features outdoor seating in a charming garden.

Wanaka's Missy's Kitchen has changed hands and is now **THE LANDING**. Melbourne restaurant veteran Jordi Hill is the vivacious front of house and chef Matz Åsberg has agreed staying on.

We love the UK-based internet wine shop The New Zealand House of Wine run by Kiwi Kelvin McLeod and his wife Jess. The service from their Sussex warehouse is swift and much appreciated by expats and locals alike. [nzhouseofwine.co.uk](http://nzhouseofwine.co.uk)



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## Argentinean whispers

Buenos Aires is best known for its steak restaurants, but now a different type of dining is creating a buzz. Closed-door private restaurants run from the homes of local residents are offering a more authentic Argentina.

Casa Coupage, in the upmarket neighbourhood of Palermo, is hosted by sommeliers Santiago Mymicopulo and Inés Mendieta. They offer blind wine tastings paired with modern Argentinian cuisine every week, with prices from \$30 to \$100.

"We never have more than 15 customers here, so it's a very personal experience," explains Santiago. "The idea is to make it feel like your home."

Casa Felix invites its guests to try pescatarian food under the stars. Open

every Thursday to Saturday, there are just 12 places each night at the table in owner Diego Felix's small backyard. As well as the fish-friendly, vegetarians and vegans are also catered for. Meals are just over \$50 for five courses.

Quirky and original menus can be found at Casa Saltshaker, run by American expats Dan Perlman and Henry Tapia at a secret location. Five themed courses and drinks cost around \$50. Perlman and Tapia chat to their guests, making the experience akin to a cosy dinner party. "We have people from all over the world," says Perlman. "That's part of what makes it so interesting." **RUTH STOKES**  
casacoupage.com, diegofelix.com, casasalshaker.com

## Capital coffee celebration

Congratulations to Wellington's Caffè L'affare, which is celebrating 20 years of making and serving damn fine coffee in its College St café. With its coffees available nationwide, capital expats can always have a taste of home. laffare.co.nz

## UNDER THE GRILL

Dick Frizzell, who lives in Hawke's Bay with his wife Jude, may be best known as the artist who made the Four Square man a national icon, but at Frizzell Wines, with winemaker Rod McDonald, he is also producing some very collectable tipples.



### WHEN DID YOU FIRST BECOME

**INTERESTED IN FOOD?** At primary school, swapping my jam sandwiches for walnut and Marmite. Or was it the other way round?

**WHAT'S YOUR FIRST FOOD MEMORY?** My mother's chocolate meringue pie. Sadly, the recipe has been lost for all time.

**WHAT IS YOUR IDEAL DINNER PARTY MENU?** Well, we're getting into Jude's department now, but her Thai feasts are something to behold.

**WHO WOULD BE YOUR DREAM DINNER GUESTS?** All my family: kids, partners, grandkids - a lively lot. And also [British art critic and broadcaster] Matthew Collings.

**WHAT'S YOUR PICK OF FOOD DESTINATION?** La Tupina in Bordeaux - at the moment - for its rustic madness. It's very dangerous to your health.

**WHAT WOULD BE YOUR DEATH-ROW DINNER?** Chocolate meringue pie.

### WHAT WOULD YOU WASH IT DOWN WITH?

Frizzell Merlot.

### WHAT'S THE WORST FOOD CRIME?

The food on Alitalia: boiled shrimp in aspic... sliced.

### WHO IS YOUR FOOD HERO?

Jude, because she feeds me.

**WHAT'S COMING NEXT IN THE FOOD WORLD?** Bellatino's in Havelock North, a fab new deli-type food store. Like Nosh in Hawke's Bay. And it's here now!

### WHAT'S YOUR IDEA OF CLASSIC KIWI

**FOOD?** After six weeks in Italy, France and Spain, I'd have to say our unbelievable variety of choice. And the depth of the quality.

### WHAT WOULD THE FOUR SQUARE MAN

**HAVE FOR SMOKO?** One of those new chocolate brownie, caramel crunch, square things.

### WHY DID THE CHICKEN CROSS THE ROAD?

He went under it. He was chicken mole.

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## A nice cuppa

Dust off your granny's white gloves and pearls – the tea room is back in fashion. Tea rooms are reappearing throughout the country, the latest being **Vintage Tearooms** in Greytown.

Drawing on her childhood in Fife, Scotland, Rona Ogilvie has fitted out her shop with period furniture, antique cake stands and English bone china teacups. A feature wall of floral Sanderson wallpaper completes the look. There's a tea menu, a selection of delectable cakes, scones and caramel slices, and nary a tea bag in sight.

In Wellington, **Martha's Pantry** has its home in a two-storey brick building that has been in the family for 95 years. Originally a drapery belonging to Martha Moran, the great-great aunt of current owners Ondine and Anita McLeod, the space under the stairs was literally Martha's pantry. Aproned pantry

girls now dance around each other in the tiny open kitchen, baking cupcakes and friands, and Kerikeri organic loose tea is served in pots with hand-knitted cosies.

**Port'O'Call** in Napier is the trendsetter, having been in business for eight years now. On one side of the shop is a boutique selling feminine fripperies, while on the other, afghans and rum and raisin fruitcakes emerge from an old Champion oven. You choose your tea cup from the display, and at every table there are old-fashioned, highly scented roses from owner Angela Bashnick's Havelock garden. **Vintage Tearooms**, 101 Main St Greytown, ph: 06-304 9703 **Martha's Pantry**, 276 Cuba St Wellington, ph: 04-385 7228 **Port'O'Call**, ph: 9 Nelson Quay, Ahuriri, Napier, 06-833 6688, portocall.co.nz

DAVID BURTON



Anita (left) and Ondine McLeod of Martha's Pantry



Polpo

## LONDON ROUND THE CLOCK

On a recent, brief visit to London, **Fiona Smith** sampled as many of the new and highly recommended cafés and restaurants in town as she could. These are her top picks from breakfast to dinner.

This Cake & Coffee Tray and matching stainless-steel cake dish with non-slip wooden surface make the idea stylish serving solution with no fuss or mess. [royalvkb.com](http://royalvkb.com)



**CARAVAN** 11-13 Exmouth Market, Clerkenwell, ph: 020-7833 8115, [caravanonexmouth.co.uk](http://caravanonexmouth.co.uk) Antipodean-run Caravan is an all-day café with adjoining bar that stands out in London for its switched-on approach to casual dining. Miles Kirby (formerly of The Providores) serves up tasty and eclectic small and large plates throughout the day, and it's a must for breakfast or brunch to fortify yourself with the fantastic coffee from the basement roastery.

**GOLDEN HIND** 73 Marylebone Lane, ph: 020-7486 3644 This tiny fish and chip shop has been feeding London workers since 1914 and has just finished an extension,

more than doubling its size. I'm assured nothing will change, which is great because its simply-poached skate is the perfect easy lunch. Also open evenings.

**HIX RESTAURANT & CHAMPAGNE BAR** Selfridges, 400 Oxford St (entry Duke St), ph: 020-7499 5400, [hixselfridges.co.uk](http://hixselfridges.co.uk)

The latest addition to British food champion Mark Hix's empire, the Champagne Bar makes a relaxing stop for weary shoppers with delicious snacks such as Scotch quail eggs with caper mayonnaise.

**PIZZA EAST** 56 Shoreditch High St, ph: 020-7729 1888, [pizzaeast.com](http://pizzaeast.com) Shoreditch is the new place

to see and be seen and Pizza East, in the same building as the exclusive Shoreditch House private club, is a huge, urban pizzeria serving deliciousness such as the veal meatballs, prosciutto, cream and sage pizza. The atmosphere is buzzing. Great for lunch or dinner.

**POLPO** 41 Beak St, ph: 020-7734 4479, [polpo.co.uk](http://polpo.co.uk) My absolute favourite.

I think we tried to eat everything on the menu. The food is Italian small plates, simple and perfectly formed. Polpo has a casual friendly atmosphere so you can pop in at any time, any day, even when you're feeling bedraggled as tourists so often do.



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## IN SEASON

### Ginny Grant welcomes spring's best produce and shares a recipe from her new book



Globe Artichokes with Almonds & Lemons

► **ARTICHOKES** are the unopened bud of a perennial thistle. They have a short season in spring and sometimes a second season in autumn. Look for blemish-free, tightly closed buds. Varieties with smaller buds such as Violetta or Purple de Jesi can be eaten raw, while the larger Globe variety is usually cooked. The classic French treatment is to boil the whole artichoke until tender. The leaves are pulled off, dipped into melted butter, Hollandaise or mayonnaise. You pull the leaf between your teeth to extract the soft flesh, then discard the tough bit. Also delicious stuffed, fried or braised, especially with other spring vegetables.

► **ASPARAGUS** Nothing screams spring louder than asparagus. The most common variety is green followed by purple and sometimes you may find white, which is the same variety as green, though with a

more delicate flavour, but is harvested either while the spear is underground or kept under cover of darkness while it grows. Choose spears with tightly closed tips and a firm stem. Snap or cut the ends before using, and peel the lower stalk if it seems tough. Fabulous dipped in butter sauces, with poached or coddled eggs, or made into a delicate spring soup with potatoes, chervil and a smidgen of cream.

► **HASS AVOCADOS** are in season year round, but are at their peak from October to March (Reed avocados are at their best during February to June). Avocados are picked mature but don't ripen until off the tree. A green-skinned Hass is a week or so off being ripe. Until the skin turns a dark green-brown hue it should be kept at room temperature. Then it can be refrigerated until ready to use. It's high in monounsaturated fat, which makes it easy to pair with most vegetables – it is particularly good with beetroot, asparagus, citrus and tomatoes.

► **BROAD BEANS** (fava beans) are best in early spring. When buying fresh broad beans, look for firm, brightly coloured, unblemished pods, preferably on the smaller side as the beans taste best and are at their sweetest when eaten young. If the podded beans are small (fingernail sized) they can be cooked with the greenish outer seed coat on. Once larger, the outer skin turns a dull white or grey and the skin will be bitter in flavour and tougher to eat. It is best to peel the outer seed coat by blanching first – this is sometimes called double podding. Mash raw baby beans with garlic, olive oil and lemon juice, and serve on crostini with a shaving of pecorino. Or try a salad with blanched double-podded beans, asparagus, goat's cheese and Dijon vinaigrette.

### GLOBE ARTICHOKES WITH ALMONDS & LEMON

SERVES 4 AS AN ENTRÉE OR SIDE DISH

This dish is as much about textures as flavours. The crunch of the bread and almonds provides a wonderful contrast to the soft artichokes.

- 4 globe artichokes
- 3 lemons (for preparing artichokes)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, peeled
- ½ cup day-old bread, ground to a coarse crumb
- sea salt
- zest of 1 lemon and 2 tablespoons juice, for the dressing
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup almonds, toasted
- 2 tablespoons chopped Italian parsley

Use a small knife to peel the artichoke stalks to the pale centre. Snap off the outer leaves of the artichokes so that you are left with the pale hearts. Trim off the tops of the leaves and around the base of the hearts. Cut in half and use a teaspoon to remove the hairy choke from each. Rub all over with the juice of one lemon to stop discolouring, then drop into water that has the juice of one lemon added (acidulated water).

Put in a saucepan with enough salted water to cover the artichokes, and add one cut lemon. Bring to the boil then simmer gently for 10 minutes or until the artichokes are tender.

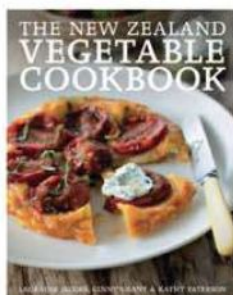
While the artichokes are cooking, heat the oil in a frying pan. Add the garlic and cook until golden. Remove and reserve. Add the breadcrumbs, cook until golden, then remove from the oil and drain on paper towels.

Make the dressing by mashing the cooked garlic clove with a little sea salt, then mixing with the lemon zest and juice and the extra virgin olive oil.

Drain the cooked artichokes well, discarding the lemon.

While the artichokes are still warm, pour the dressing over the top.

To serve, place the artichokes on a platter. Scatter the breadcrumbs, almonds and parsley over the top. Serve immediately.



### GIVEAWAY

► This recipe, by our deputy food editor Ginny Grant, is extracted from *The New Zealand Vegetable Cookbook* by Lauraine Jacobs, Ginny Grant and Kathy Paterson. We have five copies to give away courtesy of Random House NZ. To enter the draw, email us at [competitions@cuisine.co.nz](mailto:competitions@cuisine.co.nz) with Vegetable Book in the subject line.

The *New Zealand Vegetable Cookbook* is published by Random House NZ, RRP \$49.99



# diary dates

## SEPTEMBER

**2-5** THE FESTIVAL AT PUKEORA ESTATE Celebrates art, music and food, 10am-4pm each day, in Waipukurau, ph: 06-858 8388, thefestival.org.nz

**17-29** EPICURIOUS A Hawke's Bay weekend of food, wine and fun, including a cocktail evening, olive festival and brunch at the Opera Kitchen. Call Joanna Smith, ph: 06-876 9093, or Ticket Direct.

**18** BLACK BARN VINEYARDS WINTER CHEF SERIES Cocktails with Annabel Langbein, plus wine and canapés. Blackbarn Rd, Havelock North, ph: 06-877 7985, blackbarn.com

**26** VEGETARIAN EXPO Top food, top chefs, cooking demos and entertainment, 10am-4.30pm, Horticultural Centre, Christchurch, vegetarianexpo.org.nz

## OCTOBER

**14-25** NELSON ARTS FESTIVAL Twelve days of theatre, dance and music across the region. nelsonartsfestival.co.nz

**16** SIMPLY RED FAREWELL TOUR Church Road winery hosts the only outdoor concert in the New Zealand leg of the farewell tour. 150 Church Rd, Taradale, ph: 06-844 2053, churchroad.co.nz

**1-30** Crave Sydney International Food Festival A month devoted to food from barbecues to fine dining. siff.com.au

► **9 and 10** World Chef Showcase In exclusive surrounds at Sydney's Star City Harbour Ballroom, get up close and personal with New York's Wylie Dufresne and his original, techno-based cooking; the marvellous Margaret Xu Yuan from Hong Kong's Kitchen Yin Yang (see profile, page 43); Musa Dagdeviren of the famed Ciya restaurants in Istanbul; and the coolest up-and-coming chef in France - Alexandre Gauthier.

► **10** Picnic at the most spectacular picnic point in Australia, the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

► **11-22** Night Noodle Markets in Hyde Park.

**19** HAWKE'S BAY A&P MERCEDEZ-BENZ WINE AWARDS The awards dinner will be held at Waikoko Gardens, Showgrounds, Kenilworth Rd, Hastings; ph: 06-878 3123, hawkesbayshow.co.nz

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# Oh, Maille Goodness!

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## a simple heart

Margaret Xu Yuan has revolutionised Hong Kong cuisine with a back-to-basics approach that has brought rich rewards, writes Joanna Savill



**T**he menu at 30-seater Kitchen Yin Yang doesn't just change with the seasons. Most nights its chef-patron, Margaret Xu Yuan, actually serves a different series of dishes to each table. A self-taught chef who grows her own organic produce, this star of the Hong Kong food scene is definitely one of a kind.

"I wanted to do something special when I became recognised as a chef," says the former advertising stylist who changed career just over four years ago, starting with a tiny takeaway business called Cuisine X. "I had decided to change my day job and throw it all in. But I thought it would be meaningless doing just another restaurant.

"I needed to have a good reason, a mission. So I decided to do something for Chinese food and for Hong Kong in particular, to show people that if you give real food, you will be rewarded."

Eschewing the cost-driven approach of most Hong Kong eateries, where the focus is on the bottom line rather

than quality and provenance, Xu Yuan went back to basics, sourcing locally raised birds for her signature roast chicken, growing her own greens and brewing her own sauces and condiments. The result? Kitchen Yin Yang was Hong Kong's *Time Out* restaurant of the year in 2008 and its acclaim has spread well beyond the territory's borders.

A meal at Kitchen Yin Yang might start with a soup of watermelon and soft-shell crab or a duck and Yunan

**"I like single ingredients and I don't use a lot of seasoning, so it's not the typical heavy-duty Chinese food. I try to keep the tastes fresh"**

wild-mushroom soup, made only from the ingredient juices. Then there's suckling pig and a chicken gelatine - made by simmering chicken bones and feet for three days - enclosing sea urchin or home-made black pig ham.

Her famous chicken, cooked in a home-made terracotta oven built to replicate a traditional Chinese roasting oven, is marinated with a wild ginger and curry leaf olive oil and basted only with sea salt.

"I like single ingredients," Xu Yuan explains. "And I don't use a lot of seasoning, so it's not the typical heavy-duty Chinese food. Some people find my food too light but I try to keep the tastes fresh. You can put a lot of heart into simple dishes."

Her farm outside the city is certified organic. She harvests once a week and plans her menu accordingly. She grows Chinese greens and other vegetables suited to the climate, but also grows "imports" like those curry leaves, from a plant she smuggled in from Singapore. It's still early days for organics in Hong Kong but awareness is definitely increasing, Xu Yuan says.

What's also growing is a nostalgia among her compatriots for the food of old Hong Kong, with its mix of colonial influences from Britain and Portugal, plus classic Cantonese. "I think Hong Kong is getting its own identity," Xu Yuan says. "And it is very much a fusion. But of the old and the new, not international influences.

"And in the end, that's what I'm doing, too. Taking the old and the new and putting a new face on it." ☺

**KITCHEN YIN YANG**, 18 Ship St, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, ph: 852-2866 0868

➤ Margaret Xu Yuan will appear at the World Chef Showcase - sponsored by *Cuisine* - on 9 & 10 October as part of the Crave Sydney International Food Festival. See [siff.com.au](http://siff.com.au)



Duck Duck Goose

## FUSION GOES FABULOUS

The big-budget, long-overdue, vaultingly ambitious Cantonese-French restaurant Duck Duck Goose has finally landed at the city's QV building and the latest Melbourne outpost of the Sydney-based Kam Fook yum cha group well and truly boasts a blockbuster mentality. The venue's multi-tiered personalities (cocktail bar, lounge, dim sum bar, restaurant) are backed by a flurry of expensive Chinoiserie, created by BURO Architects, with a central pool and private dining rooms styled to look like birdcages. As for the à la carte menu – just don't say fusion is a dirty word. [au-ddg.com](http://au-ddg.com)



## SIBLEY'S TOUR DE FORCE

Pastry queen Philippa Sibley won widespread acclaim at the likes of Circa and Bistro Guillaume. Now you can find her at St Kilda institution Il Fornaio. Her legion of fans will be beating a path to the door in the evenings, when Sibley's desserts will be the unquestioned star of proceedings. [ilfornaio.net.au](http://ilfornaio.net.au)

**It's hip to be share(ing)** Two chefs on the run from fine dining – Bryce Bernhardt and Michael Smith – have joined forces to embrace the small-plate zeitgeist. North Fitzroy newcomer Jorg is a designer-clad hangout that tones down the chef-owners' classical training without sacrificing their inventiveness. [jorgrestaurant.com.au](http://jorgrestaurant.com.au)



## ANOTHER LIKELY LADRO

Why should people on the north side of the river have all the fun? Pizza temple Ladro recently spawned a younger sibling on slowly reviving former Prahran hotspot Greville St, and the family resemblance – from the white-tiled, inventively lit good looks to the near-faultless woodfired artisan pizzas with minimalist toppings – is inescapable. Some people are even starting to argue that the punchy all-Italian menu – sardines and polpetta, orecchiette with braised lamb, peas and fresh ricotta, and a roast of the day – is even better than at the Fitzroy original. But then, they're probably from the south side. [ladro.com.au](http://ladro.com.au)

EARL Canteen

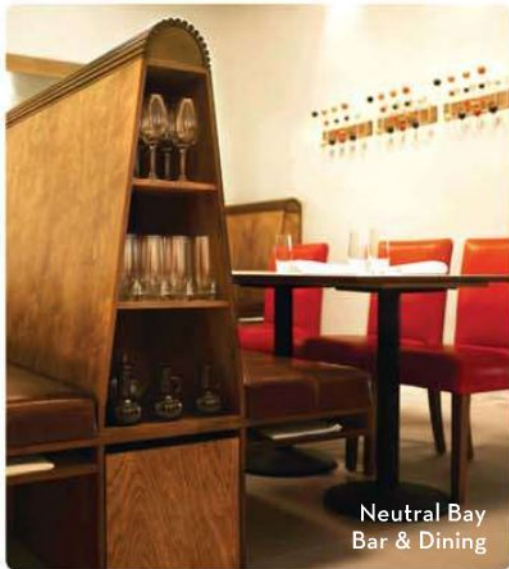


## sandwich islands

Who would have thought it, but the humble old sanger is the latest food trend to wow Melbourne. At EARL Canteen, queues form each day for the slow-roasted pork belly baguette with crackling and apple and fennel salad. Over at Le Traiteur, owned by the couple behind north Melbourne's French bistro Libertine, the excitement du jour is the roast duck breast with baked pear and caramelised onions, slathered with aioli on a baguette baked in-house. Mon dieu! Both are open weekdays from 7am. [earlcanteen.com.au](http://earlcanteen.com.au); [letraiteur.com.au](http://letraiteur.com.au)

 LARISSA DUBECKI



Neutral Bay  
Bar & Dining

**PUTTING IT INTO NEUTRAL** Part of the city-wide boom in great bars with great food, the just-opened Neutral Bay Bar & Dining is the kid brother to Glebe Point Diner, where chef Alex Kearns' homey, produce-based cooking has been packing them in since 2007. The Neutral Bay crowds are loving the charcuterie plate, Coorong angus steaks, whole snapper with pebre salsa and a mean fried green tomatoes. And there's a fine cocktail list, too. Eating life beyond the Bridge is getting more interesting by the day. [nbbaranddining.com.au](http://nbbaranddining.com.au)

**Oysters in the library** Woollahra's The Wine Library channels the smooth, Italianate vibe of its mothership, buzo, with anytime eating, including just-shucked oysters, and a huge selection of more than 350 wines. 18 Oxford St, ph: 02-9328 1600.

### STRODE STRIDES ACROSS TOWN

Merivale's Justin Hemmes has been busy. He has poached one-hat chef Jeremy Strode from Bistrophe, the teensy former butcher shop in Surry Hills, to take over at the Bistro CBD, now to be known as biSTRODE CBD, serving the cosy, mod European fare that has consistently won Bistrophe critical acclaim. Strode's chef partner Jane Strode will stay put at the alma mater, working alongside Anne-Marie Rodrigo, formerly of The Ledbury. [merivale.com](http://merivale.com)

Jeremy  
and Jane  
Strode

### To Vini, a child

Berta was the coolest opening of the Sydney winter. The Old World name comes from its hidden Surry Hills laneway location – Alberta St – but it could have been dubbed Mini-Vini, after the nearby Sydney enoteca with its Italian blackboard menu and excellent wine list. It's just a tad grungier. Vini owner/chef

Andrew Cibej has left his mark on the yummy, shared plates menu – and wine-savvy Kristen Allen (also from Vini) is on the floor. Order oxtail broth and wild-greens tortellini; polenta, Taleggio and pine mushrooms; suckling pig or lamb rump; followed by a buffalo milk and bay leaf gelato. [berta.com.au](http://berta.com.au)



Berta

### Pub and papaya

➊ The crew from the ever-popular authentic Thai bolt hole Spice I am in Surry Hills has added a pub outlet. House is a beer garden eatery with an Isan (north-east Thai) bent. That translates into pounded-to-order green papaya salads, grilled marinated beef and chicken and the gotta-have BTS for dessert. It combines brioche, pandan ice-cream and palm sugar syrup. Cash only, 202 Elizabeth St, Surry Hills.



House



Burn Cottage



## Mulholland's Drive

Central Otago Pinot specialist Claire Mulholland has moved on to a very green pasture. She has just swapped her winemaker role at Amisfield for an associate winemaker/GM position at the new, little-known producer, Burn Cottage Vineyard. Beside a desire to return to a boutique operation, Mulholland felt the pull of Burn Cottage's strong commitment to biodynamics. Owned and operated by the Sauvage family of Nevada, Burn Cottage has had a guiding hand from day one from the legendary Ted Lemon, the first American to be hired as winemaker and vineyard manager at a Burgundian estate. Burn Cottage's small vineyard is planted in a bowl-shaped site at Lowburn, predominantly in Pinot Noir with a small parcel of Riesling and Grüner Veltliner. The operation was established in 2003, and the first wines will be released later this year. "It was a hard decision to make, because I've enjoyed my time at Amisfield," says Mulholland. "But this is a unique combination of place, people and approach. I'll have a varied role and I'm looking forward to working with Ted Lemon and the Burn Cottage team, who are creating something outstanding."

"Getting the licence was a revolutionary battle. All the neighbours objected... then I invited them in for a meal and wine"

- Villa Maria CEO Sir George Fistonich at Vidal Restaurant's 30th anniversary celebrations



## SHELF LIFE

A BREATH OF AIR

Versovino is about decanting made easy. The simple gadget fits on to the end of the wine bottle and features a glass bulb through which the wine passes before being poured into a glass, to aerate and enliven the wine. Spotted in a Florence wine bar, it's now available here from Kiwi Chad Thompson. \$69-\$75. [bressino.co.nz](http://bressino.co.nz)

## Lindberg on the fly

Over a decade ago, Swedish-born Helena Lindberg was out here slipping a few Marlborough vintages into her international winemaking CV. Now, helped by renowned consultant Michel Rolland, she makes wine in Italy for the original Super Tuscan rebels, Lodovico and Piero Antinori. The brothers' new venture, Tenuta di Biserno, features a string of superb reds. The portfolio doesn't end there; in fact, it ends here. Because of Lodovico Antinori's fondness for Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, Lindberg gets to renew old acquaintances when she comes out annually to produce the Antinoris' gorgeously textural Mount Nelson Sauvignon Blanc. Does Michel Rolland have a hand in its creation? "It's the one wine he doesn't go near," she says.





## THE FERMENT

Several years ago Nicola Meikle of Christchurch lit out for Gisborne. "I'm going to meet Mr Right, a wealthy winemaker," she told her mother. It all turned out... Wright. She met and wed winemaker Geoff Wright and they now run boutique-scale, organic Wrights Vineyard and Winery. Mr Wright is working on the wealthy bit. (For more on Gisborne see page 158.)

Pinot Noir has a legendary ability to throw tantrums when travelling, especially at 37,000 feet. But Cathay Pacific has cracked the code. Twice in three years, the airline has won a global award for Best Red Wine in Business Class, all thanks to Kiwi Pinot. The wine that so impressed this year's judges was Spy Valley Pinot Noir 2007.



### DO A VERMOUTH

This new arrival from Spain is just the wine to give Vermouth an image makeover. Priorat Natur Vermut is light and delicious with more than 100 herbs. This summer, park yourself under an umbrella and sip it with anchovy olives. It's what the Catalans call *hacer un vermut* (doing a vermouth). [stvincentscave.com](http://stvincentscave.com)

## MARLBOROUGH'S NEW MANA



From left: William Hoare (Fromm), Jason Flowerday (Te Whare Ra), Hätsch Kalberer (Fromm), Anna Flowerday (Te Whare Ra), Claire and Mike Allan (Huia), Therese and Hans Herzog (Herzog) and MJ Loza (Seresin).

Far from being a monolith, there are many different Marlboroughs, and a new group of five producers – Fromm, Herzog, Huia, Seresin and Te Whare Ra – has formed MANA (Marlborough Natural Winegrowers) to promote its version of the region.

"It began some time ago, when the oversupply and a general negativity around the 2008 vintage was a big topic," says Jason Flowerday of Te Whare Ra. "The five of us came to know each other through a common commitment to organics and began meeting regularly."

MANA is not a marketing initiative.

Rather, its members see themselves as a working group of like-minded, artisanal vigneronns keen on sharing their ideas, equipment and zeal for making quality, natural wines.

Says MJ Loza, Seresin Estate's GM: "I hope it sends a message about respect, for we all make wine with respect and treat the land with respect." Not that MANA is an exclusive club. "If there are people with similar goals and philosophies, we'd love to work with them."

As Te Whare Ra's Anna Flowerday puts it: "We believe in Marlborough and we're here for the long term."

**"Marlborough is not just about large-scale Sauvignon Blanc. We're all small, we believe in making wine naturally and we want to offer an alternative route"**

- Anna Flowerday, Te Whare Ra

JOHN SAKER

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# quick smart

**Ray McVinnie** goes with the grain, pasta and pulses

**W**heat made into pasta, grains and pulses has been the mainstay of many cuisines for centuries.

Traditionally forming the bulk of a meal, these are comforting and satisfying, and with a few accompaniments to flavour them, they can be transformed into what seems like more than the sum of their parts. However, pasta, grains and pulses do not have great reputations in cultures where meat is considered the star of the meal. People often think them boring and stodgy but they need not be dull.

Pasta, a culinary success story, is popular worldwide. Noodles have been eaten in Asia for centuries and are another food that has gained worldwide recognition, even if sometimes only as the instant variety. The French penchant for couscous and chefs' liking of instant polenta have likewise made them popular.

When I grew up we only ate potatoes and bread, and sometimes rice. I didn't really understand rice as the only way I had tasted it was boiled in lots of water until tasteless and flaccid. It wasn't until I realised that if rice is cooked with an understanding of the recipes from the many different cuisines it comes from, then it is a diverse and delicious staple. This is true of all ingredients, and pasta, grains and pulses are no exception.

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY RAY McVINNIE  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT  
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST



### LENTIL EGG SALAD

Boil some **green or brown lentils** in plenty of **water** with half an **onion**, a **carrot** and a stick of **celery** until the lentils are tender. Drain, discard the vegetables, toss the lentils in a little **extra virgin olive oil**, season and serve in a salad with **cos leaves**, **soft-poached eggs**, **watercress sprigs**, **crisp bacon**, **capers**, **walnuts** and a dressing made by pouring a big splash of **red wine vinegar** into fat in the hot bacon pan after the bacon has been added to the salad.



**PEANUT RICE** Soak **brown rice** in plenty of cold **water** then rinse well. Place in a saucepan and add enough water to cover by 5cm. Bring to the boil, cover then reduce the heat to the lowest setting and cook without uncovering for any reason for 45 minutes. Uncover, fluff up with a fork and toss with **sesame oil**, lots of chopped roasted **peanuts**, chopped **coriander**, **lime juice**, sliced, steamed but still crunchy **green beans** and a diced, seeded, peeled **cucumber**. Serve with sliced barbecued **chicken thighs** that have been marinated in grated **palm sugar**, **garlic** and **dark soy sauce**.

**BARLEY WITH STEAK** Rub a piece of **sirloin** or **eye fillet** with **olive oil**, **garlic** and **black pepper**, roast in a hot oven until done the way you like it, rest then slice thinly. Make a sauce with the pan juices boiled until sticky with **red wine** and **beef jus** from the supermarket. Serve the sliced **beef** and sauce on **pearl barley** that has been boiled until tender and tossed with lots of chopped **tomatoes**, sliced steamed **asparagus** and **green beans**, and chopped **tarragon**, **chervil** and **parsley**. Your best **balsamic** on the side for drizzling on top.

**BARLEY & POTATO PILAF WITH BEEF MEATBALLS** Slow-fry chopped **onion**, **garlic**, **lemon zest** and **mint**. Cool, season and mix with **minced beef**, then form into small meatballs, brown in hot **olive oil**, remove and reserve. Fry another chopped **onion**, chopped **garlic**, a pinch of hot **chilli flakes**, a sliced stick of **celery** and a diced **carrot** until everything is soft. Add a can of chopped **tomatoes** in juice, some **chicken stock**, diced peeled **potatoes** and some well-rinsed **pearl barley**. Bring to the boil, add the reserved meatballs, cover and simmer for 30 minutes until the barley and potatoes are tender and the pilaf is thick. Serve with plain **green vegetables**.

**ORZO WITH ROAST PUMPKIN & KUMARA** Roast lots of peeled, chunked **pumpkin** and **kumara** in a little **olive oil** until browned and tender. Toss with al dente **orzo**, toasted **walnuts**, fried **sage leaves** and a drizzle of **balsamic**.

**SPAGHETTI WITH MUSHROOMS & PANCETTA** Place finely chopped **garlic** and **onion**, a little diced **pancetta**, a small **carrot**, a big sprig of **thyme**, lots of thick-sliced **Portobello mushrooms** and a splash of **red wine** in an ovenproof casserole. Cover and place in a 200°C oven for 45 minutes until everything is tender. Uncover, taste, season and toss with al dente **spaghetti**. Serve with freshly grated **parmesan**.





#### PASTA WITH RICOTTA & ZUCCHINI

Fry plenty of chopped shallots, diced bacon, parsley, thinly sliced leeks, zucchini, lemon zest and garlic in extra virgin olive oil until the vegetables are soft. Add some cooked peas and a few handfuls of baby spinach leaves. Season well and toss with hot al dente butterfly pasta, ricotta and freshly grated parmesan.

**EGGPLANT & FETA PASTA** Panfry lots of diced eggplant with chopped garlic and olive oil. Season well and toss with short al dente pasta, chopped tomatoes, basil, mint and crumbled feta.

**SPICY QUINOA & PORK** Panfry garlic and oregano-rubbed pork fillet until done, slice thinly and serve with lots of steamed quinoa tossed with extra virgin olive oil, chopped tomatoes, pickled chillies, chopped coriander, diced avocado and lime juice.

**FISH & TOMATOES ON RICE** Roast some olive oil-rubbed vine tomatoes until almost collapsing. Serve on steamed white rice with extra virgin olive oil, lemon juice, basil, finely diced preserved lemon peel and fried fish fillet or, better still, gutted sardines which are available from New Zealand Wholesale Seafoods in Auckland or Yellow Brick Road (ph: 04-801 8158).

**STUFFED CAPSICUMS** Slow-fry chopped onions, garlic, chillies, coriander, tomatoes and oregano in olive oil until the onions are soft. Mix in some leftover steamed white rice and lots of raw peeled prawns or diced skinned and boned white fish. Stuff this mixture into halved, cored and seeded red and yellow capsicums, and place side by side in a deep roasting pan. Add plenty of fish or chicken stock. Place in a hot oven for 45 minutes until the capsicums are tender and well browned, and serve with a green salad with avocado and Kaitia Fire chilli sauce on the side.

**CLAMS & ZUCCHINI** Panfry lots of thinly sliced zucchini with garlic and parsley in extra virgin olive oil, add plenty of live cockles or clams from the supermarket and continue frying until they open. Serve tossed through your favourite ribbon pasta.

#### 4 FETTUCCINE WITH FISH, FENNEL & LEMON

SERVES 4-6

400g fettuccine  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
1 fennel bulb, coarse outer leaves removed and bulb thinly sliced  
grated zest of 1 lemon  
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
600g skinned and boned firm white fish fillets, diced 3cm  
50ml Pernod or ouzo  
½ cup pitted Kalamata olives  
6 anchovy fillets, chopped  
200ml cream  
3 tablespoons chopped flat-leafed parsley  
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Drop the fettuccine in a large saucepan of well-salted boiling water, stir until it comes back to the boil and boil until al dente. Remove from the heat, drain and reserve.

Meanwhile, heat the oil over moderate heat and add the fennel, lemon zest and garlic. Fry gently for 5 minutes until lightly browned then add the fish. Mix well and fry until just coloured. Add the Pernod and set it alight. When the flames have died down, stir in the olives, anchovies, cream and parsley. Mix well and bring back to the boil by which time the fish will be just cooked.

Taste, season and toss with the hot fettuccine.



**COUSCOUS & MUSHROOMS** Fry lots of all the sorts of mushrooms you can get, including rehydrated porcini, in extra virgin olive oil with chopped garlic and lemon zest. When tender, stir this into hot couscous with lots of parsley, lemon juice and more extra virgin olive oil. Serve sprinkled with lots of crumbled feta as a first or main course, or as a side with barbecued steak or chicken.

**BUCKWHEAT BLINIS** Make these in the traditional way with yeast or simply like unsweetened pikelets, substituting some of the flour with buckwheat. Serve warm with smoked salmon, sour cream and salmon roe with iced vodka on the side (and a beer chaser). Good party food. Set the toppings up and invite everyone to eat them as they are made.

**BARLEY & ASPARAGUS BAKE** Panfry chopped onions, carrots, asparagus and button mushrooms with garlic, black olives and chopped parsley. Take off

the heat, cover with a layer of pearl barley that has been boiled in plenty of water until tender then well drained. Sprinkle with chopped tomatoes and gruyère, season and place in a hot oven until bubbling and golden. A first course or vegetarian main with a salad or a side for homemade beef hamburger patties.

**DUCK WITH RICE** Rub duck breasts with garlic and black pepper and fry for 8 minutes on the skin side and 4 on the flesh side. Take off the heat and rest. Drop plenty of peas into boiling water and, when tender, drain well and stir through boiled carnaroli rice with extra virgin olive oil, lemon juice and baby spinach leaves. Slice the duck breasts across the grain and serve on the rice and peas. Extra lemon for squeezing.

**CHICKPEAS & SMOKED FISH** Boil chickpeas until tender, drain, toss with extra virgin olive oil, flaked smoked fish, black olives, orange zest and

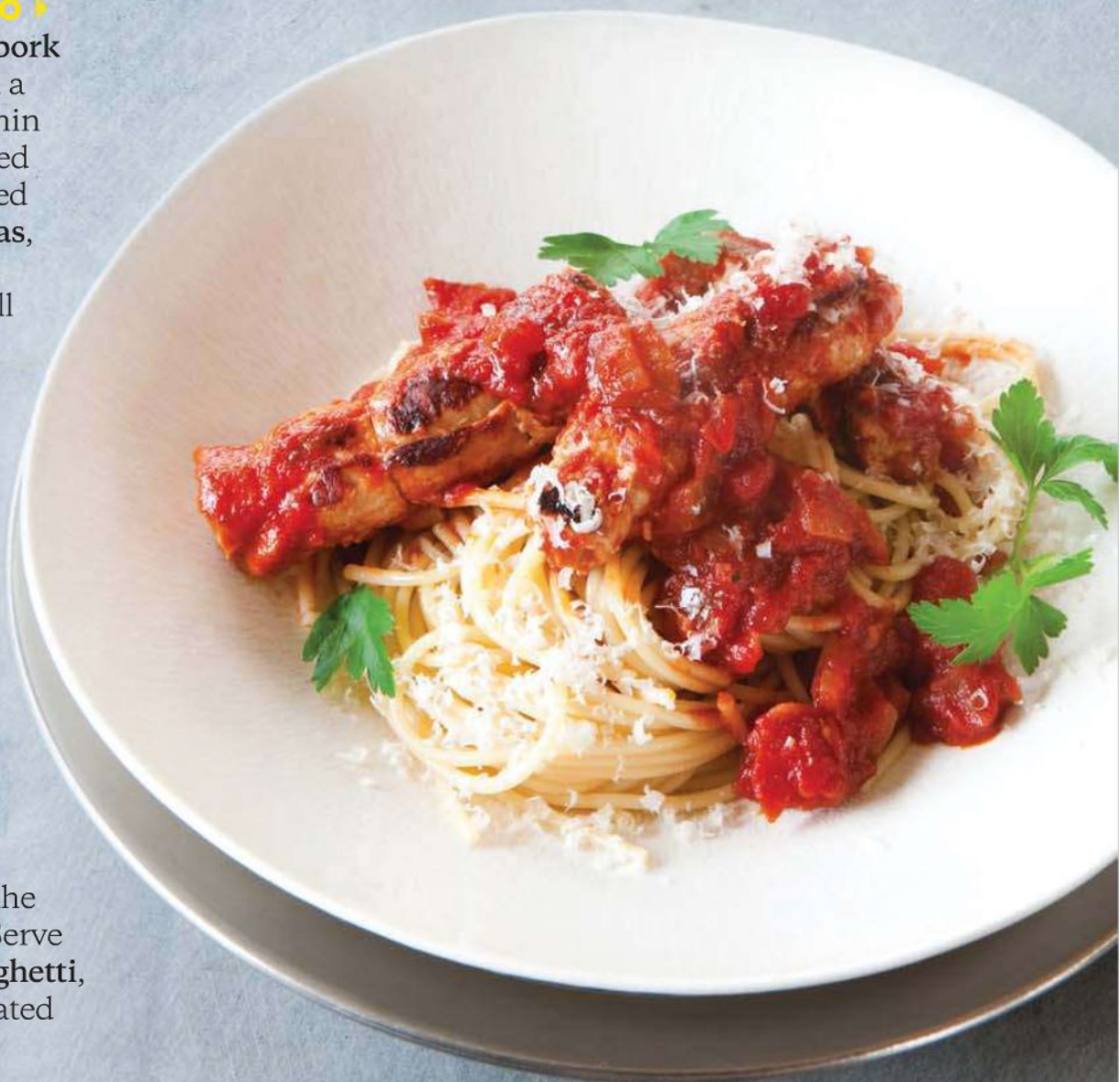
peeled segments, rocket leaves and red wine vinegar and extra virgin olive oil vinaigrette.

**BORLOTTI SOUP** Slow-fry lots of chopped onions, carrot, celery, leeks, garlic, thyme leaves and parsley until the onion is tender. Add 2 drained cans of borlotti beans, tomatoes and vegetable stock and simmer for 20 minutes. Taste, season, cool to warm, drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and sprinkle with gremolata made with finely chopped garlic, lemon zest and parsley. Eat as soup with sourdough bread.

**BEST RICE PUDDING** Simmer vialone nano or your favourite short-grain rice in a saucepan for 30 minutes with milk, cream, cinnamon, sugar and a pinch of salt, stirring frequently. Serve warm in stemmed glasses with a dollop of Greek yoghurt and sliced strawberries marinated for an hour with sugar and a splash of ouzo or Pernod.

## BRACIOLE & TOMATO ▶

Gently tap out some pork or veal schnitzel with a meat hammer until thin and even. Mix chopped prosciutto with toasted pine nuts and sultanas, place a little on 10cm pieces of the meat, roll up and secure with string. These are the braciole. Brown well in olive oil in a hot pan, remove and reserve. Make a quick tomato sauce by frying chopped onion and garlic in plenty of olive oil, add canned tomatoes, simmer for 10 minutes, taste and season. Add the braciole and simmer for 5-8 minutes until the braciole are cooked. Serve with hot al dente spaghetti, parsley leaves and grated parmesan.





## FARRO WITH CHICKEN & ASPARAGUS ♡

SERVES 4-6

In his book *On Food and Cooking*, Harold McGee says farro, or emmer wheat, is probably the second variety of wheat ever cultivated (the first was einkorn wheat, which was cultivated 10,000 years ago). I use the excellent Montebello brand of farro perlato. I first thought farro would be a heavy, dull dish best suited for cold weather, but it is deliciously light and creamy.

It is used widely in Tuscany where, with the thermometer at 130°C, many restaurants I've been to offer a farro salad on the menu. They also use it for excellent winter soups with beans.

300g farro, well rinsed and soaked in cold water for 30 minutes then well drained  
4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
2 onions, finely chopped  
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
6 skinned and boned free-range chicken thighs (about 500g), sliced 2cm thick across the grain  
400g asparagus spears, coarse ends snapped off and spears cut on the diagonal into 4cm lengths  
8 sundried tomatoes, thinly sliced  
1 large grilled red capsicum, cored, seeded, peeled and thinly sliced  
3 tablespoons lemon juice  
salt and freshly ground black pepper

In a medium saucepan, boil the soaked farro in plenty of well-salted water until tender (around ?? minutes) then drain well. Place in a large warm serving bowl and toss with the extra virgin olive oil.

In a medium frying pan, heat the extra virgin olive oil over moderate heat and add the onions, garlic and chicken then fry for around 10 minutes until well browned and the onions soft.

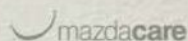
Boil or steam the asparagus for 2-3 minutes until tender but still slightly crisp. Add the chicken mixture and asparagus to the farro. Stir in the tomatoes, capsicum and lemon juice, taste and season. ✱



Credits: Handmade ceramic plate by Bob Steiner; Rockpool bowl from Nest. For full details, see Credits Index.



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# man united

Wise women shunned clubs with no class, reports **Ralph Kyte-Powell**

**G**roucho Marx once said he'd never belong to any club that would have him as a member. I've always felt the same, but when invited to join The Breathing Club I didn't hesitate. The name may sound quaint, but meetings did not consist of people sitting around studying breathing. Nobody applauded when somebody gasped convincingly, no appreciative murmurs for a nicely modulated sigh, no coy blushes at excited panting. It wasn't about respiration at all.

It was the late 1970s, the era of wine clubs, full of self-appointed authorities, less full of actual ones.

The Breathing Club was such a group, named after the act of "breathing" wine, opening it or swirling it in a glass, aerating it, revealing what was locked in the bottle. But breathing wine wasn't a big deal in this club - eating, drinking and ribaldry were.

Most wine clubs followed a set formula. Meetings involved dinner at a restaurant, controlled by two members grandly titled Food Master and Wine Master. Together the masters negotiated a menu with the restaurateur.

These negotiations drove some restaurateurs close to suicide; others thought about quitting the business for good. The masters were deadly serious, often arrogant. Bottles came to the table masked to safeguard their identity. Then members tried to identify the wines. The exercise was mind-numbingly boring, but keen aficionados nevertheless crowded loudly about their successes and were deeply crestfallen at failure.

The Breathing Club was different. Made up of young men in the wine trade, it was serious enough, but our meat pie nights, disco meetings and late-night bar crawls weren't traditional wine club pursuits. We weren't even competitive. To the "serious" wine man, we were ratbags.

And therein lies the problem wine clubs faced: they were overwhelmingly made up of serious men.

Men bring ego to the most mundane of subjects. To some, identifying a glass of wine became a statement



"What about Barb Haines?" offered one member after much thought.

"Great, yes, great," said the club secretary, scribbling down the name. "Any others?" he asked. "Um..."

The Breathing Club was deep in thought. "Sarah Graham?" suggested somebody. "Brilliant!" said the secretary, adding Sarah to the list.

"Sally Mantello, maybe?"

"Great! We're on a roll here," said the sec. But that was where it stopped. We didn't know many girls.

Still, it was a start. Next problem was working out who was going to approach these women. Hesitation and reluctance. Eventually three of us volunteered.

"Hello, Barb."

It had taken me some time to pluck up the courage to ring.

"I wonder if you'd be interested in joining The Breathing Club?"

"What's it about?" came her reply.

"Oh, we have dinner, drink great wines, have a laugh."

She paused. "Oh, I'm rather busy."

"But it's great, Barb. We go to all the best restaurants... grand cru Burgundies... You'd love it."

## Our meat pie nights and late-night bar crawls weren't traditional wine club pursuits

about self-worth. Generally, women don't see the point. As a result, most wine clubs had all-male memberships. Sadly, so did The Breathing Club.

Yet some of us really liked girls. A subversive movement developed, with rabble-rousers asking, "Why not have female members?"

There was talk of a split. Mutterings. Whispered conversations. The boozy annual meetings descended into heated arguments. Finally the male chauvinist faction collapsed under the winds of change. Women would be able to join The Breathing Club.

"Does anybody know any women?" came the question.

Looks of puzzlement. "Um, well..." The Breathing Club was for people in the trade and there were precious few sheilas in the wine biz back then.

"Well, actually I have plenty on."

"But everybody who's anybody is in it," I said, a note of anxiety in my voice.

"Like who?" she asked.

I enthusiastically listed a number of the members, chuckling as I related their antics. That was the clincher.

"No, I don't think so," she said.

"B-but," said I desperately.

"No," said Barb firmly.

At The Breathing Club's next meeting those tasked with procuring women reported. We were all unsuccessful. The girls sounded as though they'd rather have all their teeth pulled out with rusty pliers than join our club.

Each year our AGM revisited the idea of females, and each year we would ask likely lasses to join. The club eventually wound up with a whimper a decade later, still 100 per cent male. ✱



## SALADES

**Damien Pignolet, Lantern, h/b, \$65**

Damien Pignolet's previous book, *French*, has become such a staple that I have been impatiently awaiting the arrival of this one. Pignolet's recipes are always successful because he is a stickler for precision and has a fine eye for detail. This is a gorgeous collection of salad recipes in every conceivable form, including entrées, classics, sides, mains and even desserts.

His intention is to move our thinking on from salads as being a few leaves with dressing towards the concept of the *salade composée* – not just a simple start to a meal but a sophisticated marriage of texture, flavour and presentation.

The Australian master of French cuisine has again created a book full of impeccable classics and modern twists exhibiting flair and panache. 🌸 **GINNY GRANT**

## SO FRENCH: A LIFETIME IN THE PROVINCIAL KITCHEN

**Dany Chouet with Trish Hobbs, Murdoch, h/b, \$79.99**

I'm not usually a fan of the memoir-cum-cookbook; too often I find them unengaging, self-congratulatory and with mediocre recipes. I'm pleased to report that this suffers none of these faults.

Born in France during the war, Dany Chouet was a leader in bringing French cookery to Australia, yet when she opened Au Chabrol in Sydney in 1972 she went so far as to beg pre-eminent critic Leo Schofield not to review it. She didn't want to be overwhelmed with customers – as had happened at her earlier bistro Upstairs. Schofield did review it – in glowing terms – but as “restaurant x”.

After Upstairs and Au Chabrol, Chouet went on to own and run Cleopatra – a guesthouse and restaurant in the Blue Mountains – for 17 years, before returning to France in 2000 where she also runs a guesthouse. 🌸 **GINNY GRANT**

## EATING IN: FOOD TO SHARE FROM THE E'CCO KITCHEN

**Philip Johnson, Murdoch, h/b, \$69.99**

Simplicity and clarity of flavour are the hallmarks of Philip Johnson's Brisbane bistro ecco and here he sets out to encourage home cooks to create their own menus for entertaining. He provides plenty of notes on planning and preparing a menu, and the sample menus provide ideas for different occasions.

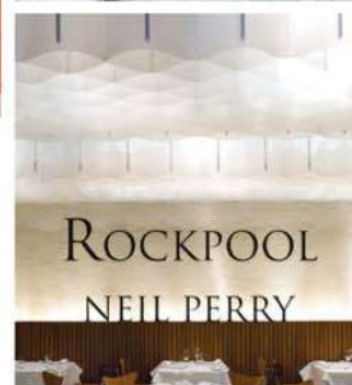
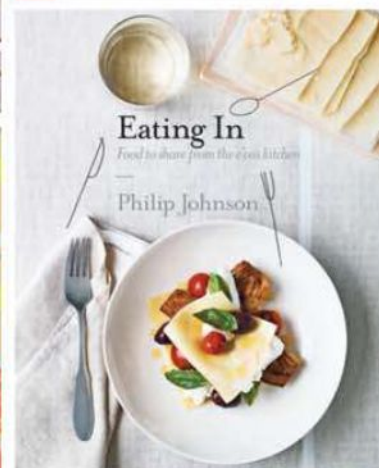
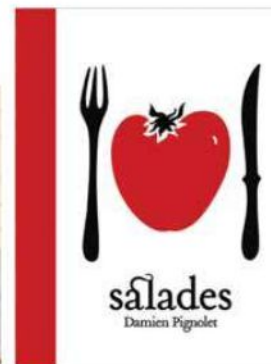
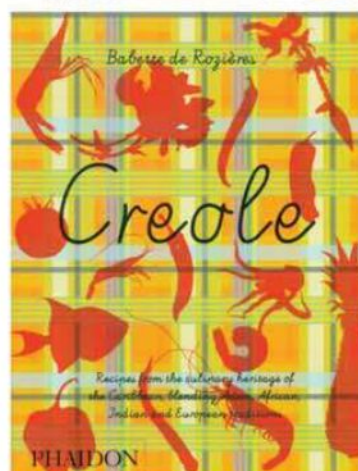
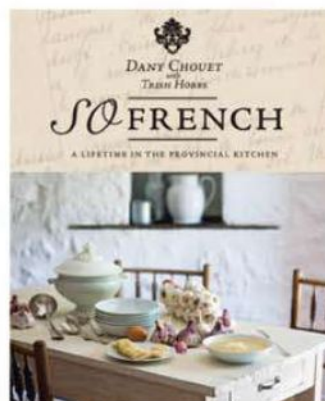
The book is divided into starter, main and dessert and the mostly simple-to-prepare recipes come with clear instructions and are easy to plate. All look extremely approachable and mouth-wateringly good to eat. And that is the strength of the book. The diversity of the recipes offers plenty for both ambitious entertainers and those of us preparing a simple family meal. 🌸 **GINNY GRANT**

## ROCKPOOL

**Neil Perry, New Holland, h/b, \$59.99**

Rockpool the restaurant turned 21 this year and this updated version of the 1997 original of the same name shows just why Neil Perry's food remains so popular: an emphasis on top-quality ingredients (ideally locally sourced), fashioned with care and thoughtfully presented.

He was one of the first to showcase the finesse of authentic Chinese, Vietnamese and Thai cuisines, while



still managing to stamp his own style on them.

Many of his signature dishes are here and all are achievable for the home cook. However, because the recipes come from the restaurant, some of the ingredients may be unaffordable or not even available to the home cook (truffles and caviar).

Many of the recipes are component based – daunting to look at the list of ingredients and number of steps, but all are easily broken down to manageable parts. The emphasis is on fish and seafood, but it was the duck recipes that I wanted to cook immediately. 🌸 **GINNY GRANT**

## CREOLE

**Babette de Rozières, Phaidon, p/b, \$55**

Born in Guadeloupe and now based in Paris, chef Babette de Rozières showcases the Creole food of her homeland. A fusion of Indian, French, and African cuisines, it is rich in the spices, fish and vegetables of the region.

The recipes are simple and easy to prepare. From acras (salt cod or vegetable fritters) to Indian-influenced curries and rice dishes, all are delicious-sounding and, as you'd expect in a cuisine from an island nation, there is a strong emphasis on seafood.

The recipes for the most part use authentic ingredients, although substitutes are suggested. You may need to search the internet to get the right proportions for the likes of Colombo powder and *graines à roussir*.

The background motif on the beautiful cover is based on the traditional Madras plaid and is echoed in the photos throughout. 🌸 **GINNY GRANT**





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LAMB FILLET WITH FARRO,  
RED CHARD & FETA PILAF  
recipe page 66

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY CELIA HARVEY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT  
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST



# love me tender

Fine New Zealand lamb stars in  
**Celia Harvey's** spring mains

**W**e are famous for our fine lamb and I think now more than ever we are spoilt for choice in the variety of cuts available. Plus, we have plenty of organic choice and no intensive farming practices, with all our lamb naturally raised and grass fed - and this is reflected in the flavour, tenderness and leanness.

These recipes are ideal for sharing around the spring table and feature some of my favourite side dishes and sauces to complement the sweetest and tastiest of meats.





## BUTTERFLIED LEG OF LAMB WITH LEEKS IN WINE & WALNUT AILLADE

SERVES 4-6

1 leg of lamb (1.5kg), boned and butterflied flat  
1 x 75g can anchovies in oil, drained  
100g butter  
4 cloves garlic  
2 sprigs rosemary, leaves only  
freshly ground black pepper  
salt to taste  
500g pink fir apple or baby red potatoes  
1 cup red wine  
½ cup chicken stock  
12 baby leeks, trimmed, halved lengthwise and cut into 5cm lengths  
100g butter  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
1 tablespoon finely chopped thyme

Place the lamb on a board skin side down and cut some deep, 5mm incisions in the thicker areas to help the meat cook evenly. With a mortar and pestle or in a food processor, work the anchovies, butter, garlic, rosemary and pepper to a coarse paste. Smear on the inside of the lamb, cover and marinate for at least 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Sear the lamb skin side down in a pan

large enough to hold it over moderate heat. Salt the outside of the lamb as it sears. Place in the oven for 15 minutes then turn over and cook for a further 15 minutes. Remove from the oven, remove from pan, cover and rest for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, bring the potatoes to the boil in salted water and simmer until cooked. Drain and leave covered over very low heat to steam and crack. Remove from the heat and lightly crush with a fork. Set aside.

Place the wine and chicken stock in a shallow pan and simmer to reduce by half. Add the leeks, butter and salt and pepper, cover and simmer until the leeks are soft and the liquid has reduced to a dark shiny glaze (about 15 minutes). Add the thyme.

Cut the lamb into long, thin slices and serve with the potatoes, leeks and walnut aillade (recipe follows).

### Walnut Aillade

Aillade, which comes from the south-west of France, is similar to savoury nut pastes like pistou and pesto. It contains a lot of garlic!

100g walnut pieces  
8 cloves garlic, peeled  
2 handfuls flat-leaved parsley

juice of 1 lemon  
100ml walnut oil  
50ml light olive oil  
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place the walnuts, garlic and parsley in a food processor and pulse until finely ground. Add the lemon juice then, with the motor running, slowly drizzle in the oils. Season with salt and pepper.







BREAD & HALOUMI STUFFED LAMB  
WITH GREEK LENTIL & TOMATO SALAD  
recipe page 68



## LAMB FILLET WITH FARRO, RED CHARD & FETA PILAF

SERVES 6

Farro is the Italian name for emmer wheat. It is brilliant in soups, salads or as a side dish alone. It needs to be soaked for 20 minutes and is firm and chewy when cooked correctly. It will overcook and split quickly so watch the cooking time.

With the lamb, it is very important to let it rest so it reabsorbs the juices.

750g lamb fillets  
1 tablespoon olive oil, plus extra for frying  
1 teaspoon cumin seeds, toasted and coarsely ground  
3 cardamom pods, split and seeds coarsely ground  
1 teaspoon coriander seeds, coarsely ground  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
1 red onion, finely diced  
1 cup farro, rinsed and drained  
2 tablespoons coarsely chopped pistachio nuts  
grated zest and juice of 1 lemon  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup chicken stock, hot  
2 generous cups baby red chard or mustard leaves  
150g feta  
extra virgin olive oil for drizzling  
1 small handful mint leaves, torn  
1 teaspoon sumac

Roll the lamb in the oil, seeds, and salt and pepper. Cover and leave to marinate while preparing the pilaf.

In a medium frying pan, fry the onion with a little olive oil. Stir in the farro when the onion starts to turn golden. Stir to coat evenly. Add the pistachios, lemon zest and hot stock. Stir in with a fork and cover with a lid. Cook for 20 minutes over medium

heat then take off the heat and cool. Taste and season with salt and pepper.

In a hot pan, sear the lamb fillets on all sides, place in a hot oven for 5-6 minutes then rest for 5 minutes.

Fold the chard and feta into the farro mixture, drizzling in a little extra virgin olive oil and lemon juice to moisten. Pile the pilaf on to a large round plate. Thinly slice the lamb on an angle and place on the pilaf. Scatter the mint over and sprinkle with sumac. Serve with a green salad of leaves and fresh herbs.

## DIJON FRENCH CUTLETS WITH SPRING VEGETABLE FRICASSÉE & NEW POTATOES

SERVES 4

A “Frenched” rack of lamb has all the meat, sinew and fat trimmed from the bones before cooking. The exposed bones make ideal handles for the morsels of juicy pink meat.

2 Frenched lamb racks (6-8 bones each)  
5 tablespoons good-quality Dijon mustard  
oil for brushing and frying  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
1 cup white wine

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Brush the lamb with 4 tablespoons of the mustard and a little olive oil, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. (Now is a good time to put the potatoes for the fricassée on to steam.)

Heat a frying pan to medium hot and sear the racks for 2 minutes each side until browned. Place the racks in a roasting pan and place in the oven for 8-10 minutes for medium rare. Transfer the lamb to a plate, cover with tinfoil and leave to rest.

Place the pan on the stovetop over low heat, add the remaining tablespoon of mustard and stir in the wine, scraping any caramelised meat juices in the pan into the sauce. You can add knobs of soft butter to the sauce for extra richness and flavour.

Cut the racks into neat cutlets and serve immediately.

## Spring Vegetable Fricassée & New Potatoes

500g scrubbed new potatoes (pick out the smallest), steamed until tender  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup white wine vinegar  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon sugar  
150g butter  
2 heads baby cos lettuce, quartered  
2 bunches spring onions (white part only), trimmed and left whole  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cups baby peas  
1 generous bunch mint, leaves only, finely sliced

Place the steamed potatoes in a bowl, pour the vinegar over and sprinkle with sugar. Cover and set aside.

In a frying pan, melt the butter over gentle heat, add the cos and fry until coloured a little (5 minutes). Add the spring onions, fry gently in the butter briefly then pour a little water over just to moisten. Season well. Cover and simmer a further 5 minutes on medium heat then add the peas and half the mint leaves. Cover, turn off heat and leave until serving.

To assemble, toss the remaining mint over the potatoes and roll them around to coat. Pile the fricassée on plates, top with potatoes, serve the lamb on top and spoon the pan sauce over.





DIJON FRENCH CUTLETS  
WITH SPRING VEGETABLE  
FRICASSÉE & NEW POTATOES



## BREAD & HALOUMI STUFFED LAMB WITH GREEK LENTIL & TOMATO SALAD

SERVES 4

The lamb loin chop with a bone still in place is sometimes sold as a lamb T-bone. This small T-bone is easily removed by cutting around it with a small knife.

You can trim the fat from the flap if you find it too fatty.

### Greek Lentil & Tomato Salad

1½ cups green lentils, washed and rinsed  
4 tablespoons tomato vinegar (Mutti brand) or good wine vinegar  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
1 generous bunch (about 250g) spinach, well washed  
250g cherry tomatoes, quartered  
3 tablespoons finely chopped dill fronds  
6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Place the lentils in a saucepan, cover with cold water and bring to a simmer. Cook until the lentils are al dente (15-20 minutes); don't overcook. Drain, refresh under cold water and drain again. Sprinkle the vinegar over, and season with salt and pepper. Set aside to cool.

In a large saucepan, add enough water to cover the bottom and bring to the boil. Add the spinach and cover with a lid to steam quickly. As soon as it wilts, drain, refresh under cold water and drain again.

Squeeze the spinach dry in small handfuls, chop finely and add to the lentils. Stir in the cherry tomatoes, dill and olive oil. Season again. Serve at room temperature.

### Black Olive & Oregano Sauce

½ cup pitted black olives (Kalamata are best), finely chopped  
1 tablespoon finely chopped oregano leaves  
1 clove garlic, crushed to a paste with a pinch of sea salt  
juice of 1 lemon  
olive oil to bind

Combine all the ingredients except the olive oil. Drizzle in enough olive oil to mix to a thick sauce. Set aside.

### Bread & Haloumi Stuffed Lamb

4 thick slices ciabatta  
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar  
¼ cup dried breadcrumbs  
3 cloves garlic, crushed  
50g soft butter  
handful flat-leafed parsley  
3-4 sprigs oregano or marjoram, leaves only  
150g haloumi, cut into cubes  
pinch of dried chilli flakes  
2 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for cooking  
8 boned lamb loin chops (make sure they have long flaps)

Soak the bread in a little water and the vinegar to soften (about 10 minutes). Squeeze out the excess liquid and place with the remaining ingredients except the chops in a food processor and pulse until combined. Lay out the lamb, place lengths of stuffing along the flaps and roll up tightly to enclose the stuffing. Tie with string a couple of times around to secure.

Brush the chops with oil and pan-roast or barbecue for 4-5 minutes each side for medium rare. Rest and serve with the lentil salad and olive and oregano sauce.

## ROMAN-STYLE LEG OF LAMB & SLOW-COOKED FLAT GREEN BEANS IN TOMATO SAUCE

SERVES 6-8

Lamb with artichokes is a typical Roman dish. This slow-cooked leg is lightened up with lemon, thyme and white wine. The pan juices make a light jus and the leftover meat is delicious tossed with bitter salad leaves and balsamic vinegar.

### Roman-Style Leg of Lamb

1 leg of lamb (1.4kg), shank attached  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
2 bulbs garlic, unpeeled  
6-8 sprigs fresh thyme  
2 cups white wine  
thickly sliced peel of 1 lemon  
4-5 artichoke hearts (I use Delmaine), quartered

Preheat the oven to 160°C. Place the lamb in a snug, deep roasting tray, rub the skin with the oil and season

with salt and pepper. Break apart the garlic bulbs and tuck the cloves all around the leg along with the thyme sprigs. Pour the white wine over and scatter over the lemon peel.

Cover with tinfoil, place in the oven and roast for 3½ hours. Halfway through cooking, baste the lamb and add the artichokes.

Remove the lamb and keep covered with foil. Discard the lemon peel and thyme, and simmer the pan juices to reduce by half. Shred the lamb from the bone and serve with the pan jus, artichokes and beans (recipe follows).

### Slow-Cooked Flat Beans in Tomato Sauce

2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 onion, finely sliced  
4 cloves garlic, cut into slivers  
500ml passata or thin tomato sauce  
400g flat green beans (use round if unavailable)  
1 sprig thyme, leaves only  
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat the olive oil in a heavy-based frying pan large enough to hold all the beans. Add the onion and fry until tender then add the garlic. When the garlic starts to colour, add the passata and turn the heat down to low.

Place the beans in the sauce in a single layer, sprinkle the thyme leaves over, taste and season. Cover and simmer for 40 minutes or until the beans are very tender. Serve with the lamb, spooning over extra sauce. 🍷

**Wine match** All these dishes will work well with dark, savoury reds such as Syrah, Montepulciano or Cabernet Franc

Credits: Glass splashback from Deco Glaze; Rockpool platter from Nest; ceramic platter and glass decanter from Cranfields; wooden chopping board and tumblers from Country Road; small carved bowl by Aimee Mcleod and Brown Design printed panel from The Poi Room; Wüsthof Ikon meat fork, Wüsthof Classic Ikon Crème carving set and small pepper grinder from The House of Knives; small decorative bowl from Chin Chin Traders; small black ceramic bowl from Corso De' Fiori; black La Chamba serving dish from French Country Collections. For full details, see Credits Index.





ROMAN STYLE LEG OF LAMB  
& SLOW-COOKED FLAT GREEN  
BEANS IN TOMATO SAUCE



A rustic breakfast table set on a light-colored wooden surface. In the upper left, a black cast-iron skillet holds several pieces of golden-brown fried fish. In the center, a light-colored plate features three sunny-side-up eggs. To the right, a small white bowl is filled with a vibrant red salsa made of diced tomatoes and peppers. A silver Moka pot stands in the upper right background. In the lower right foreground, a set of silverware with light-colored, patterned handles is laid out. The overall scene is warm and inviting, with natural light illuminating the food.

# NO BONES ABOUT IT

Hunter and fisherman  
**Al Brown** still enjoys  
his meals without meat





**H**AVING GROWN UP ON A SHEEP AND CATTLE FARM, I recall the term “vegetarian” as being somewhat perplexing and having to get it explained to me on more than one occasion. I simply could not conceive of a meal without protein, let alone a life without bacon, mutton chops, saveloys and rich casseroles. The thought of having to eat potatoes, cabbage, and parsnip and carrot mash (one of Mum’s signatures) for the rest of my life was, at that early age, slightly disturbing.

I’m picking that the percentage of people who were fully-fledged vegetarians back in the 1970s would have been minuscule. These days, while still only two per cent of our nation are practising vegetarians, there is certainly a growing trend with the rest of the population to consume less meat while embracing our greens, grains and legumes. This is hardly surprising as the variety of products and produce available today has significantly improved. Coupled with our growing awareness of and concerns for animal welfare and inhumane farming practices, you can bet this will be an ongoing trend.

While I would be fibbing to say I no longer enjoy a perfectly cooked piece of crisp free-range pork belly doused with well-made gravy, I do love to cook vegetarian and can genuinely say I am often more satisfied with the results. The flavours of vegetables are often truer and more distinctive and interesting than meats, while the health and digestion benefits are also a positive. Following are five of my favourite vegetarian recipes.



**JALAPEÑO CORNBREAD  
WITH SPICY BLACK BEANS,  
FRIED EGGS & CAPSICUM SALSA**

RECIPES AND FOOD  
STYLING BY AL BROWN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT  
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST





**JALAPEÑO CORNBREAD WITH  
SPICY BLACK BEANS, FRIED  
EGGS & CAPSICUM SALSA**

**SERVES 6**

I learnt this wicked recipe from a great chef friend of mine, Derek Pope, who I worked under 20-odd years ago at the then mainly vegetarian Aro St Café in Wellington. It can be served as a bread on the side or, as I have done here, sautéed to create a crisp outer that works so well with the beans and salsa.

**Spicy Black Beans**

2 cups dried black turtle beans  
(or 3 cans of cooked)

$\frac{1}{3}$  cup canola oil

pinch of chilli flakes

2 cups finely chopped onion

1 cup finely chopped celery

$\frac{1}{2}$  cups finely chopped green capsicum

2 tablespoons finely chopped garlic

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons dried oregano

$\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons cumin seeds,  
toasted and ground

400g can peeled tomatoes, puréed

1 tablespoon sugar

finely grated zest and juice of 1-2  
limes (depending on size)  
sea salt and freshly ground black  
pepper

Put the dried black beans in a bowl, cover with plenty of water and soak overnight. The next day, drain the beans, place in a medium saucepan, cover with plenty of cold salted water and place on high heat. Bring to the boil then lower to a simmer. Cook for 1-1½ hours until the beans are soft to the bite. Strain, reserving the liquid and the beans.

Place a saucepan on medium heat and add the oil, chilli, onion, celery, capsicum, garlic, oregano and cumin. Reduce the heat and fry gently for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the cooked beans, tomatoes, sugar and 2 cups of the bean cooking liquid (or water if using canned beans). Simmer for 20 minutes or so until the liquid is reduced. Add lime zest and juice to taste then season with salt and pepper. Refrigerate until required.

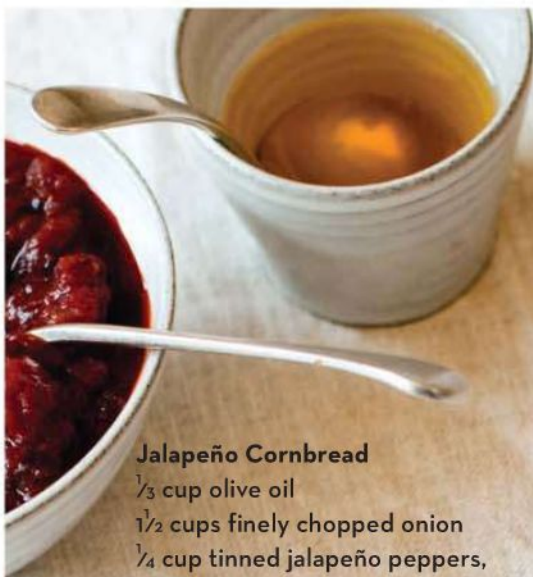




SAUTÉED GOAT'S CHEESE &  
POTATO TERRINE WITH PEA,  
BEETROOT & RADISH SALAD  
recipe page 76







### Jalapeño Cornbread

1/3 cup olive oil  
1 1/2 cups finely chopped onion  
1/4 cup tinned jalapeño peppers,  
finely chopped  
4 cups corn kernels, coarsely  
chopped  
3 cups fine cornmeal  
250ml buttermilk  
2 1/2 cups grated cheddar cheese  
2 teaspoons salt  
9 eggs

Preheat the oven to 160°C. Line a large skillet or 2 loaf tins with baking paper or greased tinfoil. Place a sauté pan on medium-low heat. Add the oil, onion and jalapeños. Fry gently for 15 minutes until the onion is transparent and soft. Place in a large mixing bowl with the corn, cornmeal, buttermilk, cheddar and salt. Set aside.

Separate the eggs. Place the yolks in a bowl and whisk until creamy. Place the whites in another bowl and whisk to soft peaks. Fold the yolks into the whites to form a light airy egg mixture. Fold this into the corn and onion mix until fully combined then pour into the prepared skillet or loaf tins

Place in the oven and bake for 45 minutes until golden and firm to touch. Insert a toothpick or skewer in the centre to check it is cooked. Remove from the oven and let cool a little before turning out.

### Roasted Capsicum Salsa

3 roasted red capsicums, peeled,  
seeded and cut into medium dice  
3 tomatoes, seeded and diced  
1/3 cup finely diced red onion  
1 clove garlic, finely diced  
1/3 cup coarsely chopped fresh  
coriander  
1/2 tablespoon freshly ground cumin  
seeds

1 teaspoon sweet smoked Spanish  
paprika  
juice of 1 lime  
1/3 cup olive oil  
12 drops Tabasco Chipotle Pepper  
sauce or regular Tabasco  
1/2 tablespoon sugar  
sea salt and freshly ground black  
pepper

Combine all the ingredients except the salt and pepper in a bowl then season to taste. Refrigerate until required.

### To serve

canola oil for frying  
6 eggs  
200g sour cream

Preheat the oven to 120°C. Cut 6 wedges of cornbread. Place a frying pan on medium heat. Once hot, add a little oil then cook the cornbread wedges on either side until golden. Remove and keep warm in the oven.

Heat the beans in a saucepan, stirring occasionally. Fry the eggs in a non-stick pan just before serving.

To serve, place a wedge of cornbread in the centre of each warmed plate, add a ladleful of beans and top with an egg. Finish with a healthy spoonful of the salsa and a dollop of sour cream. Serve now.

## CARAMELISED FENNEL CUSTARD TARTS WITH BLACK OLIVE, FETA & ORANGE SALAD

### SERVES 6

These tarts are delicious eaten straight from the oven. However, I have also made them to take on a picnic and they eat equally well served cold. You can also downsize the ingredients and make mini tarts to serve as canapés.

### For the pastry

340g flour  
225g butter, cut into 1cm cubes  
pinch of salt  
1/2 cup cold water  
1 egg yolk

Sift the flour into a large mixing bowl, and add the butter cubes and salt. With clean, cold hands, rub the butter

into the flour until it resembles chunky breadcrumbs. Do not overwork (there should be plenty of visible pieces of butter).

In a small bowl, lightly whisk the cold water and the egg yolk until combined. Add this to the flour mixture and mix through until a dough forms. Again, do not overwork the pastry; just mix it enough until it comes together.

Cut the pastry in half, wrap both halves with plastic wrap and rest in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

### Caramelised Fennel

1kg fennel bulbs, stalky tops  
discarded  
1/3 cup canola oil  
sea salt and freshly ground black  
pepper

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Cut the fennel bulbs in half and remove most of the tough inner core then cut the halves into thickish wedges. Place in a bowl, toss with the oil, and season with sea salt and black pepper.

Place in a baking dish and roast in the oven for 30 minutes or until golden and soft. Remove and cool.

### Caramelised Fennel Custard Tarts

flour for dusting  
7 egg yolks  
3 cups cream  
1 tablespoon fennel seeds, toasted  
and ground  
1 whole egg  
3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh dill  
sea salt and freshly ground black  
pepper

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Roll out the pastry on a floured bench until a few millimetres thick. Cut out 6 rounds to fit 10cm-diameter by 3cm-deep pie tins. Prick the pastry with a fork then line the tins. Alternatively, make one tart in a large quiche tin. Line the pastry with baking paper then weigh down with rice or baking beans and blind bake in the oven for 25 minutes.

Remove from the oven and carefully remove the rice or beans and paper. Stir together 2 egg yolks. Using a pastry brush, brush the insides of





CARAMELISED FENNEL  
CUSTARD TARTS WITH BLACK  
OLIVE, FETA & ORANGE SALAD



# I love to cook vegetarian. The flavours of vegetables are often truer and more interesting and distinctive than meats

the tarts with the yolk then place back in the oven for a further 5 minutes. Remove and cool in the tins.

For the custard, pour the cream and the ground fennel seeds into a suitable saucepan and place on medium heat. Bring to a simmer then turn off the heat and let the fennel seeds steep for 10 minutes.

In another bowl, whisk together the remaining 5 yolks and the whole egg. While whisking, slowly incorporate the steeped cream into the eggs. Strain the custard through a fine sieve and discard the ground fennel seed.

Add the chopped dill, and season with sea salt and black pepper.

Reserve 6 nicely caramelised pieces of fennel. Coarsely chop the rest and divide among the pie tins. Pour the custard over the fennel, filling to the top of the pie shell. Place a reserved piece of fennel in the centre of each pie.

Reduce the oven to 180°C and place an ovenproof dish containing hot water in the bottom of the oven to create a little steam while the pies are cooking.

Cook the pies for 20-30 minutes until just set. Remove and keep warm.

## **Black Olive, Feta & Orange Salad**

1 bunch rocket or similar leaves, coarsely chopped  
¾ cup Kalamata olives, cut in slivers  
100g feta, coarsely crumbled  
2 oranges, peeled, pith removed and cut into segments  
¼-½ red onion, finely sliced  
½ cup toasted pine nuts, coarsely chopped  
100ml olive oil

Place all the ingredients in a salad bowl and gently mix together until fully combined and the salad leaves are wilted.

## **To serve**

Place a warm tart in the centre of each plate with a pile of salad on the side. Eat now!

## **MASCARPONE & BLUE CHEESE POLENTA WITH WALNUTS & SWEET TOMATO RELISH**

**SERVES 6**

This has always been my “go to” winter weekend lunch dish. Polenta is typical peasant comfort food, here wonderfully enriched with blue cheese. Serve with a fresh green salad, a hunk of good crusty bread, a “knock your socks” off Cabernet Merlot and watch the culinary planets align.

## **Sweet Tomato Relish**

⅓ cup olive oil  
pinch of chilli flakes  
1 cinnamon stick  
2 star anise  
½ tablespoons finely diced garlic  
½ cup red wine  
600g canned peeled tomatoes, crushed  
½ cup sugar  
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place a medium saucepan on moderate heat. Add the olive oil, chilli flakes, cinnamon stick, star anise and garlic. Stir for a minute or 2 until the garlic turns golden. At that point, immediately add the red wine, followed closely by the tomatoes and sugar.

Reduce the heat to low and cook for 30 minutes or so, stirring occasionally, until the relish is shiny and thickened. Remove, cool then refrigerate until required.

## **Mascarpone & Blue Cheese Polenta**

700ml vegetable stock  
700ml milk  
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
250g fine instant polenta  
200g mascarpone  
100g blue cheese, crumbled  
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place a large saucepan on high heat, add the vegetable stock and milk, and bring up to a rolling boil.

In a fine stream, pour the instant polenta into the boiling liquid while

whisking continuously. Turn the heat down to low and continue to whisk. As the polenta thickens, swap the whisk for a wooden spoon and continue stirring.

After a few minutes, stir in the mascarpone and blue cheese. Taste and season accordingly.

## **To serve**

100g blue cheese, crumbled  
1 cup toasted walnuts, coarsely chopped  
walnut oil (I use Uncle Joe's from Blenheim) for drizzling

Serve the creamy polenta on to warm plates or bowls. Top with tomato relish, crumbled blue cheese and walnuts. To finish, drizzle with a little walnut oil. Serve immediately.

## **SAUTÉED GOAT'S CHEESE & POTATO TERRINE WITH PEA, BEETROOT & RADISH SALAD**

**SERVES 6**

The terrine is a little tricky, but take your time and you will love the result. The combination of goat's cheese, beetroot and fresh basil works almost any way you put them together. We have served this dish or variations at Logan Brown since opening in 1996.

## **Goat's Cheese & Potato Terrine**

1kg large Agria potatoes, peeled  
500g firm goat's cheese, crumbled  
(I use Zany Zeus)

Bring a large saucepan of salted water to the boil. Cut the potatoes into 1mm-thick slices on a mandoline if you have one, aiming to get the slices as long, wide and thin as possible.

In small batches, blanch the slices in the hot water for 30-60 seconds then plunge the semi-cooked potato into iced water to stop it cooking.

Line a small terrine or loaf tin with a double layer of plastic wrap, leaving plenty of overhang, then line with a single layer of potato slices, making sure there are no holes (the slices can





MASCARPONE & BLUE  
CHEESE POLENTA  
WITH WALNUTS & SWEET  
TOMATO RELISH



overlap). Come up the sides so there is a little overhanging at the top. Add a third of the cheese to the terrine and press down so it is evenly packed. Add a double layer of potato on top. Repeat until you have 3 layers of cheese.

Top the last layer of cheese with potato then fold the excess potato above the sides over. Likewise, fold the overhanging plastic wrap over to cover the terrine. Weigh down the terrine with a flat object that covers the top and refrigerate overnight.

### **Balsamic Syrup**

1 cup balsamic vinegar  
1 cup sugar

Pour the vinegar and sugar into a small saucepan. Place on medium-low heat and simmer to reduce to a thinnish syrup. Cool and refrigerate until required.

### **Roasted Baby Beetroot**

12 baby beetroot  
2 tablespoons canola oil  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup water  
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Place the beetroot in an ovenproof dish. Pour the oil and water over, and season with sea salt and pepper. Cover with tinfoil and roast in the oven for up to an hour until tender all the way through. Remove from the oven, cool then peel and chill in the refrigerator until required.

### **Pea, Beetroot & Radish Salad**

6 raw baby beetroot, very finely sliced  
6 radishes, very finely sliced  
1 cup peas, freshly boiled and chilled  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup torn basil leaves  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup torn mint leaves  
1 bag mizuna, rocket or similar, torn  
extra virgin olive oil for dressing  
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Toss all the ingredients, except the olive oil and salt and pepper, in a bowl. Dress with a suitable amount of olive oil, then season with sea salt and pepper.

### **To serve** canola oil for frying

Divide the salad among 6 unheated plates. Place a non-stick sauté pan on medium heat. With a wet, hot sharp knife carefully cut 6 slices of the terrine about 2cm thick.

Add a little canola oil to the pan, then gently add 2 slices of the terrine. Sauté for 1-2 minutes on each side until golden then carefully remove from the pan with a thin spatula and place on the plates next to the salad and roasted beetroot. Repeat with the remaining slices of terrine.

Drizzle a little of the balsamic syrup over and around each of the plates, and serve immediately.

## **TEMPURA CAULIFLOWER, WHITE BEAN PURÉE, CAPERS, CURRANTS & ALMONDS** SERVES 6 AS AN ENTRÉE

This is a perfect entrée for a winter dinner. It's wonderfully textural, with the tempura and almonds contrasting beautifully with the silky smooth purée. The capers and currants give the dish a salty and sweet finish.

### **White Bean Purée**

2 x 400g cans cannellini beans,  
drained and rinsed  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup olive oil  
1 clove garlic, finely chopped  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cream  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup water  
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place all the ingredients in a blender and purée until super-smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and refrigerate until required.

### **Cauliflower florets**

1 medium cauliflower

Bring a medium saucepan of salted water to the boil. Cut out the main stalk of the cauliflower and separate the cauliflower into medium to small florets. In batches, blanch the florets for a couple of minutes until just cooked. Remove and drain on paper towels. Refrigerate until required.

### **Tempura Batter**

$\frac{1}{2}$  cups tempura batter mix (available at supermarkets and Asian stores)

In a bowl whisk the flour with enough water to form a lump-free runny batter. Refrigerate until required.

### **To cook and serve**

$\frac{1}{2}$  litres canola oil  
100ml extra virgin olive oil  
pinch of chilli flakes  
4 tablespoons capers  
4 tablespoons currants, rehydrated in simmering water then drained  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup toasted slivered almonds  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup flat-leaved parsley leaves  
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 lemons, cut into wedges

Preheat the oven to 120°C. Place the canola oil in a heavy-based saucepan over moderate heat.

Place a sauté pan on low heat. Add the olive oil, chilli flakes, capers and currants. Cook for a couple of minutes before adding the almonds. Remove from the heat and set aside.

When the canola oil is 170°C (or to test without a thermometer, a piece of bread dropped in the oil should turn golden in about a minute), dip a few cauliflower florets at a time in the tempura batter then, using tongs, carefully place in the hot oil.

Cook for 1-2 minutes until crisp. Transfer to paper towels and place in the oven to keep warm while you finish cooking the rest in batches.

To serve, heat the white bean purée in the microwave or gently in a saucepan over low heat. Place a spoonful or 2 in the centre of each plate then top with 3 or 4 tempura cauliflower pieces.

Place the caper mix back on the heat to warm slightly. Add the parsley leaves and stir through. Spoon this over and around the cauliflower. Finish with a pinch of sea salt and a grind of black pepper on each. Add a wedge of lemon and serve pronto! 🍋

Credits: Nontron cutlery, Katherine Smyth ceramic plates and bowls, Paul Melser ceramic plates and Jill Bagnall beakers all from Vessel; all other props privately owned. For full details, see Credits Index.





TEMPURA CAULIFLOWER, WHITE  
BEAN PURÉE, CAPERS, CURRANTS  
& SLIVERED ALMONDS





# 5 OF THE BEST

**Kathy Snowball** prepares her favourite chicken dishes







## CHICKEN IS SUCH A DELICIOUS AND VERSATILE MEAT.

I am mad about it and eat it several times a week. The secret, of course, is to start with the best chicken, either free range or organic, and grown locally if possible.

Choosing five recipes for this feature posed quite a challenge. Choosing 50 would have been easier – I wanted to include everything. However, after much deliberation, here are my (current) five favourites, chosen on the basis of variety, the season and flavour.

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING  
BY KATHY SNOWBALL  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE BROWN  
STYLING BY KRISTINE DURAN-THIESSEN





## Little chicken sandwiches with a glass of Champagne – a marriage made in heaven

### CHICKEN SANDWICHES MAKES 24 SMALL SANDWICHES

Little chicken sandwiches with a glass of Champagne – a marriage made in heaven. If pushed for time you can use a barbecued chicken and good prepared mayonnaise, but I prefer to start from scratch. I poach a chicken by the Asian method of lowering it in and out of the stock. This heats the bird inside and out before the cooking starts, accelerates the cooking, and produces white succulent flesh with the added bonus of stock for soup and some leftover chicken for a salad. Alternatively, you can poach chicken breasts in stock until tender.

1 onion, halved  
1 carrot, chopped  
1½ sticks celery, finely chopped  
1 teaspoon salt, plus extra for rubbing  
4 black peppercorns  
1.8kg chicken  
2 egg yolks  
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
200ml light olive oil  
2 tablespoons finely chopped chives  
1 spring onion, finely chopped  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
12 slices white bread  
handful watercress leaves

To poach the chicken, place 4 litres of water in a large stockpot, add the onion, carrot, 1 stick celery,

1 teaspoon salt and the peppercorns, and bring to the boil. Truss the chicken, leaving a loop over the top to hold it with and rub the chicken all over with salt. Lower the bird into the simmering stock for 30 seconds then remove. Repeat this process 3 times.

Return chicken to the saucepan and poach over gentle heat for 15 minutes. Turn off the heat, cover with a lid and let stand for 45 minutes.

For the mayonnaise, combine the egg yolks, mustard and lemon juice in a blender. With the motor running, slowly drizzle in the olive oil until thick and glossy. Season to taste.

Remove the chicken from the stock and plunge into cold water for a few minutes to stop the cooking process and to set the juices. Strain the stock, simmer to reduce by half and reserve for another use.

Remove the breast meat and shred (reserve the legs and thighs for a salad). Combine the chicken, 6 tablespoons of mayonnaise, chives, remaining celery, and spring onion, and season to taste. Spread half the bread slices with a little more mayonnaise and some watercress leaves then spoon on 2-3 tablespoons of the chicken mixture, keeping it away from the crusts. Top with the remaining bread slices. Using a serrated knife, cut off the crusts and cut the sandwiches into 4 fingers, squares or triangles.

### SPANISH-STYLE CHICKEN CASSEROLE SERVES 4-6

This “all in one dish” is fast and simple to cook, with everything going in the one pan. Despite the short cooking time, it’s full of flavour. I like to cut a chicken into 8 pieces (your butcher can do this for you), but you can use chicken pieces. I have used Spanish flavours, but kept them subtle so as not to overpower the flavour of the chicken.

2 tablespoons light olive oil  
1.8kg chicken, cut into 8 pieces,  
or 8 chicken thigh cutlets  
280g chorizo, cut into 3cm pieces  
1½ cups chicken stock  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
1 onion, chopped  
2 cloves garlic, chopped  
½ teaspoon smoked sweet paprika  
pinch of saffron threads, soaked in  
1 tablespoon hot water  
⅓ cup dry sherry or dry white wine  
400g can peeled tomatoes and  
their juice  
2 x 400g cans cannellini beans,  
drained and rinsed  
⅔ cup green olives  
2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaved  
parsley

Heat the oil in a large heavy-based casserole, add the chicken in batches and brown. Remove from the pan and





CHICKEN SANDWICHES



**SPANISH-STYLE  
CHICKEN CASSEROLE**



set aside. Add the chorizo in batches and brown. Remove from the pan and set aside then add the chicken stock and bring to a simmer, scraping up any caramelised juices, then set aside.

Place the extra virgin olive oil in the pan, add the onion and fry over low heat until soft. Add the garlic, paprika and saffron mixture, and stir for 1 minute. Add the sherry or wine, reserved stock and tomatoes, bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes then add the chicken and chorizo, cover and cook over low heat for 15 minutes. Add the cannellini beans and olives, and cook uncovered for about 10 minutes until the chicken is tender then stir in the parsley. Serve with a leafy green salad.

**MARINATED CHICKEN &  
CRACKED WHEAT SALAD  
SERVES 4**

My idea of a perfect chicken salad is a piece of poached chicken, some lettuce and avocado, a blob of mayonnaise and some crusty bread – hardly a recipe at all. So here is the next best thing, based on the flavours of the Mediterranean. I have flattened the chicken with a rolling pin, so it cooks evenly and quickly. You can grill the chicken in advance and have it at room temperature, but I like to serve it still warm and juicy.

Cracked wheat is now available in most supermarkets or health food stores. If you can't find it, you can make a similar salad using couscous.

- 8 chicken thigh fillets
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup extra virgin olive oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons chopped thyme
- 1 tablespoon za'atar (available at delicatessens; see What to do With, page 125)
- 1 tablespoon light olive oil
- 2 spring onions, finely chopped
- 1 cup cracked wheat (burghul)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cups chicken stock
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup mixed chopped herbs
- peel of  $\frac{1}{4}$  preserved lemon, finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped dried apricots
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup roasted slivered almonds
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup lemon-infused extra virgin olive oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup plain unsweetened yoghurt
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- rocket leaves tossed with extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar
- toasted Turkish bread to serve

Place the chicken thigh fillets between 2 pieces of baking paper and gently flatten with a rolling pin.

In a bowl, combine the chicken, extra virgin olive oil, lemon juice and thyme, and marinate for 1 hour.

Place the chicken on an oven tray and sprinkle both sides with za'atar. Chargrill or barbecue on both sides until browned and cooked through.

Heat the light olive oil in a saucepan and cook the spring onions over low heat until soft. Add the cracked wheat and stir to coat then add the stock, season to taste, cover and cook over low heat for 10 minutes until the liquid has been absorbed.

Tip the wheat mixture into a bowl, fluff up with a fork and cool. Add the herbs, preserved lemon, apricots, almonds and lemon-infused oil, mix to combine and season to taste with salt and pepper.

For the yoghurt dressing, combine the yoghurt, garlic and lemon juice, and season to taste.

Spread a little cracked wheat salad on to plates, top with chicken, drizzle with yoghurt dressing (or serve to one side). Place dressed rocket alongside and serve the remaining salad and toasted Turkish bread to one side.



MARINATED CHICKEN &  
CRACKED WHEAT SALAD



My idea of a perfect chicken salad is a piece of poached chicken, some lettuce and avocado, a blob of mayonnaise and some crusty bread - hardly a recipe at all. So here is the next best thing



## CHICKEN DUMPLING SOUP WITH ORECCHIETTE & PEAS

SERVES 4

Chicken soup is the ultimate comfort food. The secret to this version is a good clear, rich stock that “tastes of chicken”. It’s important to skim the stock, then simmer it over very low heat – this prevents it from becoming cloudy. You can make stock with chicken carcasses, but I prefer to make it with wings as they have a good ratio of skin, flesh and bones to give maximum flavour. For a simpler dish, you can add shredded chicken to this recipe instead of the dumplings, but I love the texture of these little balls – they are definitely worth a little extra effort.

### Chicken Stock

1kg chicken wings  
1 onion, halved  
1 carrot, chopped  
2 sticks celery, chopped  
6 parsley stalks  
6 black peppercorns  
1 bay leaf

Wash the wings, place in a large stockpot, add the remaining ingredients and cover with water. Bring slowly to the boil, skimming off any scum that comes to the surface as the stock heats. Reduce the heat to a low simmer and cook for 2 hours. Turn off heat and let stand for 30 minutes. Remove the wings and vegetables, and strain the stock through muslin. Set aside to cool then refrigerate until cold. Remove the fat from the surface then simmer the stock over low heat until reduced to 2 litres. Set aside.

### Chicken Dumplings

200g minced chicken  
2 tablespoons chopped flat-leafed parsley  
2 tablespoons chopped dill  
100g fresh breadcrumbs  
2 tablespoons finely grated parmesan  
1 egg  
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Combine all the ingredients in a food processor, season to taste and process until the mixture just comes together. Using wet hands, roll the mixture into walnut-sized balls. Refrigerate until ready to use.

### For the soup

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
1 stick celery, finely chopped  
1 carrot, finely chopped  
1 cup orecchiette  
1 cup frozen peas

Heat the oil in a large saucepan, add the onion, celery and carrot, cover and fry over low heat until soft. Add 2 litres of chicken stock and bring to a simmer. Add the pasta and simmer over medium heat for 5 minutes then add the peas and dumplings, and cook a further 5 minutes or until the pasta is al dente and the dumplings are cooked. Serve immediately.

## ROAST CHOOK MY WAY

SERVES 4

There are many ways to roast a chicken and I have tried them all. Now I just do it “my way”, with the best free-range chook, lots of butter, lemon juice and garlic, herbs picked straight from the garden, and sitting in a few centimetres of water to keep it moist. I never tire of it.

I use a variety of herbs and when French tarragon is in season, I add that to the mix, as it works so well with chicken. It grows in several places around my garden, dying off in winter, then magically appearing again in spring. Make sure you use French tarragon and not the Russian variety, which has no flavour.

My preferred ways to serve roast chook are on a bed of risoni (rice-shaped pasta) tossed with leeks and





CHICKEN DUMPLING SOUP  
WITH ORECCHIETTE & PEAS





wilted spinach to soak up the rich juices, as I have done here, or with sautéed potatoes and a salad of rocket, radicchio and feta.

1.8kg chicken, rinsed and patted dry  
1 large lemon, halved  
4 sprigs thyme  
4 sprigs rosemary  
4 sprigs French tarragon (when in season)  
extra virgin olive oil for drizzling  
butter for roasting  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
12 cloves garlic, unpeeled  
60ml (¼ cup) dry white wine  
½ cups risoni

1 tablespoon light olive oil  
2 leeks (white part only), chopped  
2 bunches English spinach, stalks removed, washed and coarsely chopped

Place the chicken in a roasting pan, breast side up. Juice the lemon halves and pour over the chicken, rubbing some into the skin, then stuff the lemon husks inside the cavity with a sprig of thyme, rosemary and tarragon, if available.

Drizzle the chicken with extra virgin olive oil and dot with butter. The amounts are up to you, but I like to be generous. Coarsely chop the remaining thyme, rosemary and tarragon leaves, and sprinkle over and around the chicken, then sprinkle with sea salt and black pepper. Add some water to the pan (the vital ingredient) to a depth of about 2cm then add garlic cloves.

Roast at 200°C for 70 minutes then test for doneness by piercing the thigh to see if the juices run clear. Remove from the oven, transfer the chicken and garlic to a plate and cover loosely with tinfoil to rest.

I don't skim off any fat from the pan, but you can if you prefer. Add the wine to the pan juices, bring to the boil and reduce to the consistency of pouring cream then season to taste.

Meanwhile, for the risoni with leeks and spinach, add the risoni to a saucepan of simmering salted water and cook over medium heat for about 8 minutes or until al dente. Drain.

Heat the light olive oil in a wok, add the leeks and stir over medium heat until tender. Add the spinach and stir-fry until wilted. Toss the risoni and spinach mixture together. Serve the chicken and garlic cloves on a bed of the risoni mixture and drizzle with the reduced pan juices. ✪







# A Bottle of WINE Once Sold FOR £105,000



*In 1985, a bottle of '1787 Chateau Lafitte' was auctioned at Christies in London for the equivalent of NZ\$377, 661 today. The wine belonged to Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States.*

*When the buyer, Christopher Forbes, proudly displayed his delicious investment, the ancient cork shrank and fell into the bottle - turning the world's most expensive bottle of wine into the world's most expensive bottle of vinegar. Mr Forbes might not have been left with a nasty taste in his mouth had he sought guidance from the start.*

## What Sort of Nose Do You Have For Investing?

Investing is all about making your money work harder for you, or, to put it another way, investing can help you get the future you want. You know where you'd like to be in years to come, and you can make decisions about how to achieve it, but you might appreciate professional investment guidance to get you safely started.

To help you make well-informed decisions, we provide expert personal guidance, backed by thorough investment research. Our approach is transparent and totally focused on you as an individual. For more than 22 years we've provided valuable guidance for thousands of clients who, as a result, have achieved their financial goals.

If you'd like to improve your future by investing wisely, please feel free to contact us for a free, no-obligation initial meeting, it's an opportunity for you to talk, ask questions and find out more.

SPI04CUI

*Please contact us on 0800 777 801 or visit [spicers.co.nz](http://spicers.co.nz)*

*A disclosure statement is available on request and free of charge.*

**SPICERS**



A teal-colored plate with a gold Greek key border is centered on a light-colored background with green floral patterns. The plate has a scalloped edge and a gold rim. The text "rise" is in a large, black, serif font, and "to the occasion" is in a smaller, gold, cursive font below it.

# rise *to the occasion*

A cake is just the thing to mark an  
event or can be an event in itself,  
says **Ginny Grant**

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RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY GINNY GRANT  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY AARON McLEAN  
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST





**FLOURLESS CHOCOLATE  
& BLACK DORIS PLUM CAKE**



## DON'T THINK IT IS POSSIBLE TO HAVE A CELEBRATION WITHOUT CAKE.

And nothing says "I thought you needed a pick-me-up" to a friend like the delivery of a cake. Cakes are a must-have at morning and afternoon teas, and book club would not be the same without one. Cakes are perfect at any time of day or night and can do duty as pudding – quite a few of these fit the bill. And a cake is a great way to cater for lots of people at once. While we all have our preferences towards a style of cake, it is rare that someone says no to a slice. For that reason, I believe you can never have too many cake recipes or enough occasions to bake them.

### FLOURLESS CHOCOLATE & BLACK DORIS PLUM CAKE

I love Black Doris plums and in winter I use the tinned variety to get my fix. They are beautiful paired with chocolate and here I've made a variation on the River Café's chocolate nemesis – a mousse-like cake best eaten in small slices as it is very rich. Serve with a good yoghurt such as Clevedon Valley Buffalo.

850g can Black Doris plums, drained, halved and stones removed  
250g dark chocolate (minimum 60% cocoa solids)  
150g butter  
150g caster sugar  
4 eggs

Preheat the oven to 120°C. Line a 22cm round cake tin with baking paper and grease with butter. Place the plums in the base cut side down then set aside while you make the cake batter.

Place the chocolate and butter in a bowl over a saucepan of simmering water until melted.

In a small saucepan heat 100g of the sugar with 75ml of water until the sugar has dissolved and the syrup has come to the boil. Remove from the heat and cool for a few minutes before stirring into the chocolate.

Beat the eggs with the remaining 50g of sugar until very light and fluffy. Pour in the chocolate and beat until just combined. Carefully pour the mixture over the plums.

Place the tin in a baking pan lined with a clean tea towel and add enough warm water to come halfway



up the sides of the tin. Put in the oven and bake for 50 minutes or until the cake has just set. Remove from the oven and allow the cake to cool in the water bath before turning out on to a plate and removing the baking paper.

If you are having trouble turning out the cake, warm the tin over a low gas flame to loosen it.

### RHUBARB & ROSEWATER UPSIDE DOWN CAKE

This vibrantly colourful cake is best eaten warm on the day it is made – although it will still taste delicious a day or two afterwards, the rhubarb will lose brightness and the cake will soften.

**For the rhubarb**  
3-4 rhubarb stems  
25g butter  
25g caster sugar  
1 tablespoon rosewater

Line the base of a 20cm springform tin with baking paper and grease with butter.

Cut the rhubarb on the diagonal into 3cm-thick slices and set aside. In a small saucepan, gently heat the butter and caster sugar until the mixture begins to caramelise. Pour into the base of the tin. Arrange the rhubarb in the base and set aside while you make the cake batter.

**For the cake**  
100g butter  
150g caster sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
2 eggs, separated  
150g flour  
1½ teaspoons baking powder  
125ml milk

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

Beat the butter and sugar together until pale and fluffy. Add the vanilla extract then the egg yolks one at a time, beating well after each addition.

Sieve the flour and baking powder and add to the egg in 2 lots alternately with the milk.

Beat the egg whites to soft peaks then fold through the cake batter. Spoon the batter on top of the rhubarb and smooth down.

Bake for 50 minutes (you may want to place a baking tray at the bottom of the oven to catch any drips from the rhubarb). The cake should be firm to the touch.

Cool the cake for 5 minutes then run a knife around the sides of the tin and remove the side. Invert the cake on to a serving plate and remove the base and baking paper. Serve warm with whipped cream and the rhubarb and rosewater syrup (recipe follows).

**Rhubarb & Rosewater Syrup**  
150g caster sugar  
150ml water  
1 rhubarb stem, chopped  
1 tablespoon rosewater  
juice of ½ lemon

In a small saucepan heat the sugar and water until the sugar dissolves. Add the rhubarb and cook for 5 minutes. Strain through a sieve then add the rosewater and lemon juice.



RHUBARB & ROSEWATER  
UPSIDE DOWN CAKE





CITRUS LAYER CAKE











### CITRUS LAYER CAKE

Here the humble sponge cake is transformed into a moist citrusy layer cake. I used lemon curd, but you could substitute oranges, blood oranges or grapefruit. The cake is finished with a simple lemon trickle icing and it never hurts to serve it with lashings of whipped cream.

#### Lemon Curd

100g butter  
200g caster sugar  
grated zest and juice of 3 lemons  
(you need ½ cup juice)  
3 eggs and 2 egg yolks, beaten

In a heavy-based saucepan heat the butter, sugar, and lemon zest and juice over a low heat until the butter and sugar have dissolved.

Strain the eggs through a sieve then add to the saucepan, stirring with a wooden spoon constantly until the mix thickens (about 5 minutes). Be careful not to let the curd boil or it will curdle. Pour into clean, sterilised jars and, once cool, store in the refrigerator for 1-2 weeks.

Makes 2 cups (you need about 1 cup for the cake).

#### For the cake

3 eggs  
¾ cup caster sugar  
1 cup flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
2 tablespoons milk  
45g butter  
grated zest of 1 orange and  
1 tablespoon juice

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Butter and flour 2 x 20cm round sandwich tins or a large tin (adjust the cooking time for the large tin to 25-30 minutes).

Beat the eggs and sugar until thick and creamy. Sift the flour and baking powder, and fold gently through the egg mixture. In a small saucepan, place the milk and butter, and heat until the butter has melted, but don't let it boil. Add the orange zest and juice then fold through the batter.

Divide the mixture between the 2 tins, smooth the tops and bake for 15 minutes or until the sponge comes away from the sides and the top bounces back when pressed gently.

Allow the cakes to cool for 10 minutes before removing from the tin. When cold cut each cake in half horizontally. Use a palette knife to spread a generous amount of lemon curd between the layers and stack on top of each other. Drizzle the icing over (recipe follows) and allow to set. Garnish with candied peel if you wish.

#### Lemon Trickle Icing

25g butter, melted  
grated zest of 1 lemon and  
1 tablespoon juice  
2 tablespoons boiling water  
2 cups icing sugar

Combine all the ingredients, whisking until smooth.

### SPICED APPLE LOAF WITH CRUMBLE TOPPING

This dense, moist cake is a good keeper. You could just as easily use pears instead of the apples. It could be served warm as a pudding with custard or cold for afternoon tea.

#### For the apples

50g butter  
50g brown sugar  
3 apples (I used Braeburn as they hold together well, but Granny Smiths also work), peeled, cored and finely diced

In a frying pan melt the butter, add the sugar and when the sugar has dissolved add the apple. Cook for 5 minutes until lightly caramelised then set aside to cool.

#### For the crumble

50g butter  
50g brown sugar  
75g flour  
¼ cup toasted hazelnuts, coarsely chopped

Beat the butter and sugar together until pale and fluffy. Add the flour and hazelnuts, and mix to a coarse crumb. Set aside.

#### For the loaf

150g butter  
150g brown sugar  
200g plain flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
2 teaspoons cinnamon  
½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg  
1 teaspoon mixed spice  
2 teaspoons ground ginger  
3 eggs  
¼ cup milk

Preheat the oven to 160°C. Grease a loaf tin (12cm x 23cm) with butter then line the base and both ends with baking paper.

Beat the butter and sugar together until pale and fluffy. Sift the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, mixed spice and ginger into a bowl and set aside.

Add the eggs one at a time to the creamed butter and sugar, and beat well after each addition. Add 1-2 tablespoons of the flour mix to stop the eggs curdling then fold in the remaining flour and milk until just incorporated. Fold the apple in then spoon the mix into the loaf tin. Sprinkle the crumble topping over evenly and place in the oven.

Bake for 90 minutes. After an hour the top of the crumble should be golden; place a sheet of baking paper on top of the loaf to stop it browning further and bake for the remaining time. A skewer should come out clean when inserted into the middle of the loaf.

Allow the loaf to cool in the tin for 15 minutes before removing from the tin. It can be served warm with the following grape compote and lightly whipped cream or even a custard. This loaf is deliciously moist and should keep well for up to 3 days.





SPICED APPLE LOAF  
WITH CRUMBLE TOPPING



ORANGE & CARDAMOM  
SYRUP CAKE



**Grape Compote**

400g green seedless grapes, halved  
50g caster sugar  
50ml water  
juice of ½ lemon

Place all the ingredients in a small saucepan, bring to a simmer and cook until the grapes are just starting to break down (about 5 minutes) then remove from the heat. Serve warm.

**ORANGE & CARDAMOM  
SYRUP CAKE**

Cakes made with olive oil have a fine crumb and texture. They also keep very well. I like the simplicity of this cake – it isn't too sweet, but has a rich golden colour thanks to the eggs.

**Grand Marnier Syrup**

200g caster sugar  
zest and juice of 2 oranges  
zest and juice of 2 lemons  
6 cardamom pods, lightly crushed  
150ml water  
¼ cup Grand Marnier (or more  
to taste)

Place all the ingredients except the Grand Marnier in a small saucepan. Bring to the boil, making sure the sugar is dissolved, then simmer for 5 minutes. Strain through a fine sieve and add the Grand Marnier.

**For the cake**

4 pods cardamom  
150g caster sugar

6 eggs, separated  
grated zest and juice of 2 oranges  
(you need ½ cup juice)  
½ cup olive oil  
200g flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
3 tablespoons polenta

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Line the base of a 20cm springform tin with baking paper then grease the sides with butter. Set aside.

Remove the cardamom seeds from the pods and using either a mortar and pestle or food processor grind with a little of the sugar. Strain through a sieve to remove any large pieces. Put all the sugar, cardamom seeds and egg yolks in a mixer and beat until light and fluffy.

In a separate bowl mix together the orange zest and juice, and olive oil. In another bowl sieve the flour and baking powder and stir in the polenta. Add the wet and dry ingredients to the egg mix alternately in 2 lots, folding gently.

Beat the egg whites to soft peaks and fold into the batter. Spoon into the tin and bake for 30-35 minutes until the top is golden and firm to the touch. Turn off the oven and leave in the oven for a further 15 minutes (this helps to prevent the cake deflating).

Remove and while still warm poke holes in the cake with a skewer then pour half the warm syrup over. Leave to cool in the tin. Run a knife around the edges of the tin then remove the springform side and peel off the baking paper.

Serve wedges of the cake with the reheated remaining syrup and crème fraîche, whipped cream or yoghurt. ❁

Credits: Antique gold cake forks, crystal bowl and plate, coloured glass bowl, Crown Lynn Bambi and Crown Lynn parrot ornaments, silver cake stands, Japanese vase, 1950s blue vase, Poole cup and saucers, and paua teaspoon from Antiques of Epsom; antique decorative plates, silver coffee set and star cup and saucers all from Haunt; Cordon Bleu white cake stand and Spiegelau small glass jug from The Studio of Tableware; grey glass vase and Paris wrapping paper from Macy Home; Victoriana Toile, Red, Santorini Grey, Grand Palais, Patchwork toile, Quail Covey fabrics from Martha's Furnishing Fabrics; all other props privately owned. For full details, see Credits Index.





## Treat yourself this winter to Tatua Farms Crème Custard.

A luxurious smooth and creamy custard ready to serve straight from the pack. Heat and pour over your favourite desserts, add to trifles, create delicious sauces or try our mouth-watering butterscotch custard pots recipe.

### Butterscotch Custard Pots

Created by Genevieve McGough

#### INGREDIENTS

- 50g butter
- 1/2 cup soft brown sugar
- 500g Tatua Farms Crème Custard
- 1 tablespoon cornflour
- 1 1/2 tablespoons cold water
- 4 ramekins or short black coffee cups
- Demerara sugar to serve

#### METHOD

1. Melt butter in a large pot on low heat.
2. Add brown sugar, stirring occasionally until sugar turns a dark caramel brown colour.
3. Remove from heat and stir in the custard. Be careful not to splash any hot sugar on your skin.
4. Simmer on low heat for 5 minutes until sugar has dissolved.
5. Mix together cornflour and water until combined. Slowly pour into the custard, stirring constantly. Simmer for 2 minutes then remove from heat and cool for 5 minutes.
6. Pour into ramekins and bang on the bench to even out the surface.
7. Chill for 2 hours then sprinkle with Demerara sugar just prior to serving.

Serves 4



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# butter

## BUTTER'S BETTER

Forget the food fads.

**Fiona Smith** celebrates the beauty of butter

A piece of fresh bread with a nice slab of butter is a delightfully simple pleasure. The alchemy achieved when cream is churned has enhanced cooking for centuries, yet in this modern world of food paranoia, its reputation has been tarnished. But butter is back and being celebrated as the wonderful natural product it is. It is also the cook's secret weapon – it never ceases to amaze me how many oohs and aahs are uttered when I panfry a piece of fresh fish in butter, or melt some on vegetables. Just a little butter adds flavour, creamy mouthfeel and immense satisfaction to so many dishes.

I only use unsalted butter, as I find the taste fresher. Salt is a preservative so salted butter can be stored longer, but its fresh taste deteriorates over time, to the point where bought butter can be rancid. With unsalted you can also determine how much salt you need to add. Foil-wrapped butter is better protected from light, heat and mishandling than when paper-wrapped. Fresh is best, so if you can source freshly made butter from a local farmers' market or artisan varieties such as Karikaas (which has a short shelf life but freezes well; available at specialty food stores), then all the better for recipes like these where butter is the star.





BUTTER BAKED FISH  
WITH FENNEL & PEAS





Hollandaise is probably the most popular butter-based sauce, but it is notoriously difficult to make, involving whisking melted butter into egg yolks very slowly to form an emulsion. If you are a butter sauce novice, it may be better to start with the simpler ones.

**BEURRE NOISETTE** “Hazelnut butter” is simply butter cooked until golden brown, which gives off a delicious nutty aroma. Commonly served on fish, it is also lovely with chicken, pasta or anything you fancy. Try adding capers, lemon juice or finely chopped nuts.

Place butter in a saucepan and melt. Continue cooking until it becomes golden brown then remove from the heat and stop the cooking process by pouring into a cold bowl or putting the saucepan in a sink of cold water.

**BEURRE BLANC** This sauce is made with a reduction of wine, vinegar and shallots (and sometimes herbs) with butter quickly whisked in. It is perfect with fish or steamed vegetables.

1 shallot, finely chopped  
125ml white wine  
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar  
4 black peppercorns  
100g unsalted butter, cut into 6 pieces  
lemon juice to taste  
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place the shallot, wine, vinegar and peppercorns in a saucepan and simmer until reduced by half. Strain into a bowl and place over a saucepan of boiling water. Quickly whisk in the butter, a piece at a time, until incorporated. Season to taste with a little lemon, salt and pepper.

Or you can strain the reduction into a warmed Thermos flask, add the butter, seal tightly and shake for about 2 minutes. You can keep the sauce warm in the Thermos until ready to use. Makes  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup.

## BUTTER BAKED FISH WITH FENNEL & PEAS

**SERVES 4**

This is a simple recipe, but you need to have a few things just so. Use thick fillets, ideally about 3cm thick, so the fish and fennel cook in the same time. Blue cod or small hapuku and monkfish work well. It is best cooked in a dish that is about the same size as the fillets to ensure the peas don't get too much direct heat, making them dry up. Lastly, cook it in a metal dish if you have one, so it heats through fast. If you only have a ceramic or glass dish, preheat it in the oven.

2 medium bulbs fennel (about 200g each)  
2 cups peas  
4 thick fish fillets (about 150g each)  
2 tablespoons capers  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
1 lemon, thinly sliced  
100g butter (from a whole cold block)

Preheat the oven to 220°C.

Slice the fennel very finely, using a mandoline if you have one. Spread over the base of an ovenproof metal dish (see note above). Top with the peas then the fish fillets. Scatter the capers over, and season to taste with salt and black pepper. Arrange the lemon slices over the top of the fish.

Cut thin slices off the top of the block of butter and cover the entire surface of the fish with plenty as it flavours the fish and vegetables (it is best to weigh the block of butter before you start and slice off 100g).

Bake for 20 minutes or until the fish is cooked through.

**Wine** A vibrant 2009 Awatere Valley Sauvignon Blanc.

## ROSE VEAL RAGOÛT WITH TOMATO BUTTERED NOODLES

**SERVES 4-5**

This central European-style veal stew would typically be made with white veal, but I used rose veal, a fantastic alternative. Rose veal is pink, having been reared mostly outdoors and fed on grass as well as milk. It is typically from 6- to 8-month-old calves (similar to the age of lamb).

Rose veal is available through Gourmet Direct ([gourmetdirect.com](http://gourmetdirect.com)) and has a delicate flavour that is lovely with the butter and caraway. Alternatively, you could substitute beef rump, but it will result in a stronger-flavoured stew.

This ragoût gets better a day or two after being made.

100g unsalted butter  
1 onion, finely chopped  
1 carrot, finely chopped  
1 stick celery, finely chopped  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup finely chopped flat-leaved parsley  
4 teaspoons caraway seeds  
1kg shoulder of rose veal, cut into 2cm cubes  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
2 tablespoons flour  
300ml chicken stock  
300g mushrooms, sliced  
1 tablespoon tomato paste  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon caster sugar  
400g pappardelle or ribbon noodles

In a heavy-based casserole dish or large saucepan, melt 25g of the butter over a medium heat and stir in the onion, carrot, celery, parsley and caraway seeds. Sauté, stirring, for 8 minutes then remove from the pan and set aside.

Season the veal cubes with salt and pepper. Melt 25g of the butter in the pan and stir in the veal. Fry, stirring, for 5 minutes until browned then stir in the flour. Cover, turn to a very low heat and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the chicken stock and bring to the boil then add the mushrooms and sautéed vegetables. Reduce to a low heat, cover and cook for about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours until the veal is very tender. Taste and season with extra salt and pepper if needed.

In a small bowl, beat the remaining 50g butter until light and fluffy. Beat in the tomato paste, salt and sugar. Chill until needed.

Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil and salt well. Cook the pappardelle or noodles until al dente. Drain, toss with the tomato butter and serve with the ragoût.

**Wine** Any Hawke's Bay Syrah.





ROSE VEAL RAGOÛT WITH  
TOMATO BUTTERED NOODLES



## SPAGHETTI WITH ANCHOVIES & GREENS WITH BUTTER CRUMBS

### SERVES 2

This recipe serves two, but can just as easily be made for one or four people by halving or doubling the quantities. It is a very quick and delicious meal, and you can substitute any green vegetables you like.

200g spaghetti  
2 zucchini, thinly sliced  
300g broccoli, cut into small florets  
80g butter  
1 cup fresh sourdough breadcrumbs  
10 anchovy fillets  
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
1 teaspoon lemon juice  
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil and salt well. Cook the pasta for 3 minutes less than according to the packet instructions then add the zucchini and broccoli, and cook for the remaining 3 minutes. Drain.

Meanwhile, put 30g of the butter in a medium frying pan over a medium-

high heat and add the breadcrumbs. Fry, stirring, for about 5 minutes until toasted. Set aside.

Put the remaining butter in the frying pan with the anchovies and garlic, and cook for 2 minutes, mashing the anchovies with a fork.

Place the drained pasta and vegetables back in the saucepan and add the anchovy butter mixture, season with lemon juice, salt and pepper, and toss well.

Divide between 2 bowls and scatter with the breadcrumbs.

**Wine** A light, bright style of Pinot Grigio.

## POTTED SMOKED FISH WITH BREAD & BUTTER PICKLE

### MAKES 3 CUPS

This old-fashioned way of potting fish preserves it in flavoured butter. The traditional way is to clarify the butter, giving you a lovely rich, clear yellow seal, but you need twice as much butter. Not clarifying the butter doesn't look as good but still tastes terrific. Serve this on toast as a light supper-type dish.

600g smoked fish fillet (I use trevally)  
2 tablespoons finely chopped dill  
2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley  
2 tablespoons horseradish sauce  
2 tablespoons lemon juice  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
500g or 250g unsalted butter  
(see note above)

Carefully flake the smoked fish into small pieces, removing any bones as you go. Place in a bowl with the dill, parsley, horseradish and lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

To clarify the butter, melt 500g of butter in a saucepan over a low heat without stirring then leave to settle so the milk solids fall to the bottom. Spoon the liquid butter off the solids and strain through a sieve lined with a damp muslin cloth. Discard the solids.

Alternatively, melt the 250g of butter in a saucepan.

Combine three-quarters of the melted or clarified butter with the fish and mix well. Pack into ramekins, bowls or jars (totalling about 3 cups) and pack down tightly with a fork.





SPAGHETTI WITH ANCHOVIES &  
GREENS WITH BUTTER CRUMBS





POTTED SMOKED FISH WITH  
BREAD & BUTTER PICKLE



Pour the remaining butter over the top and refrigerate.

Bring to room temperature for at least 30 minutes before serving. Serve on toast with bread and butter pickle (recipe follows). Keeps for a week in the refrigerator.

**Wine** A lighter, low-tannin style of Pinot Noir.

### **Bread & Butter Pickle**

**MAKES 2 CUPS**

½ cucumber  
1 onion, very finely sliced  
2 tablespoons rock salt  
½ cup cider vinegar  
½ cup sugar  
¼ teaspoon ground turmeric  
¼ teaspoon celery seeds  
1 teaspoon mustard seeds  
¼ cup coarsely chopped dill

Halve the cucumber lengthwise and scoop out the seeds. Slice very thinly, using a mandoline if you have one. Place in a colander along with the onion and combine with the salt. Leave for 30 minutes then rinse thoroughly.

Meanwhile, place the vinegar, sugar, turmeric, celery seeds and mustard seeds in a saucepan, bring to the boil then cool. Mix with the drained cucumber and onion, and the dill. Keeps for 2 weeks in the refrigerator.

### **RAISIN & CINNAMON PUDDINGS WITH BRANDY BUTTER**

**MAKES 6**

If you want to serve these individual puddings in teacups, you can temper them to prevent them cracking.

Place the cups on a rack in a saucepan, cover with cold water, cover with a lid and bring to the boil. Reduce to a simmer and simmer for 10 minutes. Turn off the heat and cool in the water to room temperature.

1 cup raisins  
1 cup brandy  
200g butter  
100g golden syrup  
3 medium eggs  
225g self-raising flour  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
100g soft dark brown sugar

Place the raisins in a small saucepan and cover with the brandy. Bring to a gentle simmer then turn off the heat and leave to cool. When cool, drain the raisins, reserving the brandy.

Put 100g of the butter and the golden syrup in a large bowl and beat until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Fold in the flour and cinnamon then the drained raisins.

Divide the mixture among 6 x 200ml ramekins, dariole moulds or teacups (grease them with butter if you want to turn out the puddings). Place in a large steamer, cover and set over simmering water for 30 minutes, topping up the water when necessary.

Beat the remaining 100g of butter until light and fluffy. Beat in the sugar then add about 3 tablespoons of the reserved brandy, a little at a time, beating well after each addition. Chill until needed.

Serve the hot puddings drizzled with any remaining brandy and top with the brandy butter. ❄️

Credits: Antique fish server and enamel ladle from Antiques of Epsom; tea towel and small Rockpool bowl from Nest; handmade ceramic salt and pepper dishes, small ceramic bowls and large ceramic pasta bowl all from Bob Steiner Ceramics; saucer from Haunt; all other props privately owned. For full details, see Credits Index.



**RAISIN & CINNAMON PUDDINGS  
WITH BRANDY BUTTER**





# great escape

For **Ray McVinnie**, lunch with friends  
is the next best thing to a holiday





**STEAMED ASPARAGUS WITH SEAFOOD,  
ROASTED TOMATOES & ALMONDS**

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING  
BY RAY McVINNIE  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT  
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST

## *The Menu*

Roasted Kalamata olives, Sicilian  
olives & salami

Steamed Asparagus with Seafood,  
Roasted Tomatoes & Almonds

Steak Frites with Red Wine Mushroom  
Sauce & Beurre de Montpellier

Bitter Salad with Peas & Fennel

Caramel Custards with Orange Salad  
& Almond Biscuits





think a long lunch with friends is the ideal way to spend a day. When I travel, they are the things I enjoy most and some of my best memories are of lunches with friends in Italy. These times are when I relax and enjoy everyone's company, even if I am doing the cooking.

Long lunches make me feel civilised and are an escape from the usual routine. Probably because of their association with holidays overseas, they make me feel completely "off duty".

So ease into lunch with a jug of three parts Campari, four parts pink grapefruit juice and lots of ice topped up with soda water. Gentle and relaxing. With drinks, offer Kalamata olives tossed with olive oil, garlic, lemon peel and thyme, placed in a roasting pan and roasted in a 200°C fanbake oven for about 20 minutes until very hot and slightly wrinkled. I like to serve these tender aromatic black olives mixed with crunchy Sicilian green olives. A plate of thinly sliced salami (I like that spicy paprika-flavoured Spanish salami) completes the picture.

## STEAMED ASPARAGUS WITH SEAFOOD, ROASTED TOMATOES & ALMONDS

SERVES 6

This is a quick dish to put together if you have everything ready. Roast the tomatoes and garlic in advance and reheat when needed. Have the almond and red capsicum paste, and asparagus and seafood all ready, too.

- 12 small ripe tomatoes, cored
- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup roasted almonds
- 1 large roasted red capsicum, peeled, seeded, cored and sliced
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 6 paper-thin slices prosciutto
- 800g asparagus, ends snapped off
- 18 scallops
- 300g raw peeled prawns
- 600g skinned and boned firm white fish fillet, diced 3cm (I used monkfish)
- 50ml dry white wine
- 50ml chicken stock

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Place the tomatoes on a small roasting tray. Add 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and rub all over the tomatoes. Place the garlic around the tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper.

Place in the oven and roast for about 15 minutes until browned and almost collapsing. Remove from the oven and keep the tomatoes warm.

Place the roasted garlic, almonds, capsicum and vinegar in a small blender and blend until smooth. This can also be done with a mortar and pestle. Keep blending and add the extra virgin olive oil slowly until the mixture is creamy. Taste, season and set aside.

Place the slices of prosciutto flat on a baking sheet, side by side. Place in the oven (still at 200°C) for 5 minutes until crisp. Remove and reserve.

Drop the asparagus into a large saucepan of boiling salted water. Bring back to the boil and boil 3 minutes until the asparagus is hot but still crisp. Drain well and place on a warm serving platter.

Heat a large frying pan over high heat. Add the remaining olive oil and the scallops, prawns and fish, and fry until coloured. Add the wine and let it bubble for 30 seconds. Add the stock and boil until the liquid has almost disappeared and the seafood is just cooked. Add the almond mixture and mix quickly. Panfry for 1 minute.

Spoon the seafood over the warm asparagus. Put the warm tomatoes and their juices on top. Break up the prosciutto into small shards and sprinkle on top of everything.

**Wine** An intense, bone-dry Riesling or a herbal Sauvignon Blanc with plenty of acidic cut-through.

## STEAK FRITES WITH RED WINE MUSHROOM SAUCE & BEURRE DE MONTPELLIER

SERVES 6

Use skirt steak, which is cheap and tasty, or your favourite cut. Rubbed with garlic and olive oil, it is quickly fried or barbecued, thinly sliced and served with a make-ahead chunky, meaty sauce.

The red wine mushroom sauce can be made in advance and reheated, as can the beurre de Montpelier. Keep the beurre in the fridge, but let it soften at room temperature before serving so it is creamy.

The beurre de Montpelier is based on an Elizabeth David recipe from her book *French Provincial Cooking*. It is traditionally an accompaniment for fish such as cold salmon but, like other egg sauces, it works well with steak, especially as it contains anchovies, tarragon and capers – all of which are good with steak.

### Red Wine Mushroom Sauce

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 6 shallots, chopped
- 1 stick celery, thinly sliced
- 1 carrot, diced 2cm
- 500g button mushrooms, halved
- 1 fresh bay leaf
- 1 large sprig fresh thyme
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 250ml red wine
- 500ml beef jus (I used Essential Cuisine Classic Beef Jus as I like the flavour)
- salt and freshly ground black pepper



STEAK FRITES WITH RED WINE  
MUSHROOM SAUCE & BEURRE  
DE MONTPELLIER



*Skirt steak fried or barbecued over very high heat  
for a short time is as tender as sirloin*





**BITTER SALAD WITH PEAS & FENNEL**

Heat the oil in a deep frying pan over moderate heat and add the shallots, celery, carrot, mushrooms, bay leaf, thyme and garlic. Fry gently for about 10 minutes until the shallots are soft and everything is browned. Turn up the heat, add the wine and let it boil for 1 minute. Add the beef jus and boil until the vegetables are soft and the liquid reduced and slightly syrupy. Discard the herbs. Taste and season. Remove from the heat and reserve.

#### **Beurre de Montpellier**

1 large handful each watercress sprigs (no coarse stalks) and baby spinach leaves  
 ¼ cup each loosely packed tarragon, flat-leaved parsley and chervil leaves

6 anchovy fillets  
 1 gherkin, chopped  
 2 tablespoons capers  
 3 hard-boiled egg yolks  
 1 raw egg yolk  
 100g butter, softened  
 50ml extra virgin olive oil  
 salt and freshly ground black pepper

Drop the watercress, spinach and the herbs into a saucepan of boiling water. Let everything wilt for about 30 seconds, remove from the heat, drain well and cool under cold water then squeeze dry.

Place in a food processor with the anchovies, gherkin, capers and hard and raw egg yolks. Blend until smooth then add the butter and blend

until smooth again. Slowly add the oil until all is incorporated. Taste and season. Reserve.

#### **“Frites”**

An easy way to make great frites for a lot of people all at the same time without having to use a deep-fryer.

1.5kg Agria or your favourite floury potato, peeled and cut into 2cm-thick chips  
 4 tablespoons olive oil  
 flaky sea salt to taste

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Place the potatoes on 2 of your biggest baking trays. Add half the oil to each and a good sprinkling of salt, and mix well with your hands.

Spread out the potatoes so they are not packed on top of each other. Place in the oven for 40-45 minutes until golden and crisp and not stuck to the tray. If they are stuck, cook them longer until they lift off.

#### **For the steak**

I like the delicious beefy flavour of skirt steak, a cut usually thought best used for slow-cooking. However, if fried or barbecued over very high heat for a short time, it is as tender as sirloin. My butcher recommended the part of the skirt steak called the “paddle”, which is about 1cm-2cm thick and, unsurprisingly, an oval paddle shape.

1kg skirt steak (or your favourite cut of steak), trimmed of fat and sinew  
 4 tablespoons olive oil  
 2 cloves garlic, crushed to a paste with ½ teaspoon flaky sea salt

Place the steak in a bowl. Add the olive oil and garlic, and massage all over the steak.

Heat a frying pan or barbecue until smoking hot. Fry or barbecue the steak for about 3 minutes on each side until well browned but medium rare. Remove from the heat, loosely cover with tinfoil and rest in a warm place for 5 minutes.

Thinly slice the steak across the grain of the meat and serve it with the reheated sauce over it, a dollop of the



CARAMEL CUSTARDS WITH ORANGE  
SALAD & ALMOND BISCUITS



*Because of their association with holidays overseas, these  
big lunches make me feel completely "off duty"*



beurre on top and the frites on the side. Follow it with the bitter salad with peas and fennel (recipe follows).  
**Wine** A balanced, dark Hawke's Bay Cabernet Merlot.

## BITTER SALAD WITH PEAS & FENNEL

**SERVES 6**

This sharp, refreshing salad is served after the main course in the French manner to cleanse the palate. Make the dressing in the bowl in advance, then add the salad leaves and peas and toss when needed.

Witloof or curly endive leaves work well if you can't get radicchio. It also tastes great simply with cos lettuce.

75ml extra virgin olive oil  
juice of 1 large lemon  
1 small bulb fennel (or three baby fennel bulbs), coarse outer leaves removed, stalks cut off and bulb thinly sliced  
finely chopped peel of ½ preserved lemon or zest of 1 fresh lemon  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
½ cups peas  
4 handfuls baby cos lettuce leaves  
1 handful globe-shaped radicchio leaves, thickly sliced  
mint leaves for serving

Place the oil, lemon juice, fennel and preserved lemon peel or zest in a large salad bowl. Mix well, taste and season. This can be done well in advance.

Just before serving, drop the peas into a saucepan of boiling water and boil for 2 minutes. Drain well and cool a little then add to the salad bowl with the cos, radicchio and some mint. Mix well and serve.

## CARAMEL CUSTARDS WITH ORANGE SALAD & ALMOND BISCUITS

**SERVES 6**

These taste a little like a classic crème caramel – a baked egg custard with caramel or toffee in the bottom of the container. These custards are not turned out as they are too soft, so are eaten out of the ramekin. They need several hours to chill and set so are perfect for making the day before.

## Almond Biscuits

**MAKES ABOUT 36**

These are based on a recipe from British food writer Henrietta Green's book *New Country Kitchen*.

100g butter  
115g golden syrup  
115g caster sugar  
115g flour  
1 teaspoon lemon juice  
125g sliced almonds

Preheat the oven to 160°C. Line 2 baking trays with baking paper or grease with a little butter.

Put the butter, golden syrup and sugar in a saucepan over low heat and stir until dissolved. Do not let it boil. Remove from the heat. Stir in the flour, lemon juice and almonds.

Put well-spaced teaspoonfuls of the mixture on the baking trays. They will spread, so give them plenty of room. Place in the oven for about 10 minutes until spread, bubbling and golden.

Remove from the oven and leave to cool. Store in an airtight container in single layers with baking paper between each.

## Caramel Custards & Orange Salad

1 cup caster sugar  
¼ cup water  
3 eggs  
200ml full-cream milk  
500ml cream  
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
4 oranges, peeled with a sharp knife and pith removed  
1 teaspoon honey  
3 slices crystallised or glacé orange, cut into thin slices, or 1 tablespoon candied peel  
3 tablespoons orange liqueur

Preheat the oven to 180°C fanbake.

Have 6 small heatproof ramekins (or bowls or small cups) about 100ml in capacity and a small lightly buttered heatproof tray ready.

Place ¾ cup of the sugar in a saucepan with the water. Bring to the boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Once boiling, do not stir or the mixture may crystallise. Boil until golden brown. Remove from the heat

and carefully pour a little of this caramel into each ramekin. Swirl each ramekin around so the caramel coats the bottom and sides, and goes hard. Cool.

Pour the remaining caramel on to the buttered tray to cool. Reserve.

Beat the eggs with the remaining sugar until thick, pale and creamy.

Put the milk, 200ml of the cream and the vanilla in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Remove from the heat and, while stirring the eggs quickly and continuously, pour the hot milk and cream on to the eggs and sugar. Cool for 5 minutes so the bubbles dissipate. Pour the mixture into the caramel-lined ramekins.

Place the ramekins in a roasting dish. Add enough hot water to come three-quarters of the way up the sides, place in the oven and bake for 25-30 minutes until set but still wobbly in the middle when you shake them.

Remove from the oven and take the custards from the roasting dish. Cool the custards and chill for at least 5 hours.

Separate the orange segments and, using a sharp knife, cut small wedge-shaped pieces of orange out from between the membranes. Place these and any juice into a bowl.

Add the honey, crystallised orange or peel and the liqueur. Mix carefully but well and let stand 10 minutes so the honey melts.

Break the caramel into small pieces and whip the remaining cream. Serve each custard with a dollop of whipped cream, a sprinkling of caramel pieces, and with a small bowl of the orange salad and some biscuits on the side. ☺

Credits: Casa Armani Bohème plates, Casa Armani Arpa cutlery and Casa Armani Corelli highball tumblers from Matisse; Society Italian linen tablecloth and napkins from Siena; Spiegelau glasses and glass jug from The Studio of Tableware; Tolix chairs from Madder & Rouge; flowers from Cartier for Flowers; Paola Navone for Egizia glasses and small black bowl from Corso De' Fiori; small green ceramic bowls from Japanese Lifestyle; all other props privately owned. For full details, see Credits Index.





EMPIRE RED



WHITE



ONYX BLACK



TANGERINE



PEARL METALLIC



PISTACHIO



COBALT BLUE



APPLE GREEN



CINNAMON



IMPERIAL GREY

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# PEOPLE'S SQUARE MEALS

MICHAL HAINES BRINGS  
NO-FUSS EVERYDAY CHINESE  
FOOD TO THE TABLE



RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY MICHAL HAINES / PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT / STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST





HEARTY PORK HOTPOT  
WITH NEW POTATOES  
recipe page 124





on the Chinese flag stand for the five main ethnic groups of China's vast landscape: the Han, the Tibetan, Mongol, Manchu and Muslim. The vast majority of those (around 92 per cent) are Han Chinese, but there are some 55 official minority groups, according to the Chinese government, making up about 125 million people. They were invaders, assimilators, merchants, businessmen and nomads, who brought their own distinct styles of eating, so the idea of a quintessential Chinese cuisine has no real meaning. These groups have some of the most incredible food, well beyond what I grew up with as a Chinese New Zealander.

For me, everyday Chinese food is what I was taught by my mother. Born to a Chinese migrant who came here after the gold rush with his father, my mother's parents were among the many who found a new life here. My grandfather was an exceptional cook who, due to his Cantonese heritage, taught my mother and in turn me the importance of top-quality, fresh ingredients, and how to transform those into classic Chinese dishes.

The dishes here are my comfort food, which I can throw together quickly from sheer habit and are all

about making use of easy-to-find ingredients. While I have a repertoire of what are called Imperial dishes (complex dishes that take far too long to prepare), these are dishes anyone can make with little more than what's in their pantry. I always use seasonal produce as it is abundant and the best quality, and I buy cheaper cuts of meat, working with them, as I was taught, to get the most from them. Using techniques that focus on cooking to suit the ingredients is most important.

Often Chinese cooking may call for two different types of cooking processes for one dish. The extra time taken is worthwhile in really bringing out the best of those ingredients.

Walking around the Muslim sector in Shanghai or eating in a roadside restaurant on the banks of the Guilin River, you find the food speaks of the people of each place. As my grandfather taught me, adaptation is all important as a cook, so I have reworked my Chinese repertoire to include crisp bright-coloured salads of the Dai people, barbecued meats rich in flavour and fragrance that combine spices of the Silk Road with Mongolian influences, handmade breads and dumplings and Uighur pilaf-style rice dishes, which work so well on a cold wintry night.





FIVE SPICE POACHED BEEF  
WITH RICE NOODLES

RECIPES AND FOOD STYLING BY RAY MCVINNIE  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT  
STYLE EDITOR TAMARA WEST



## FIVE SPICE POACHED BEEF WITH RICE NOODLES

**SERVES 6**

Beef shin or flank is ideal for this slow-cooked dish which can be prepared well ahead of time. The bones give fantastic flavour. I have also made this using lamb shank, which was deliciously successful.

The aroma of this dish is reminiscent of those you find at any market in central Asia dishing out bowls of slow-cooked lamb and goat with noodles.

Any noodles you like, fresh or dried, work here. Go to Chinese supermarkets for good-quality, locally made fresh noodles that take just moments to prepare. Rice noodles are my favourite and just need to be soaked in boiled water to bring them back to the soft texture I appreciate them for.

500g beef shin, bone in, or beef flank, all sinew removed  
1 star anise  
1 cinnamon quill  
2 whole cloves  
1 teaspoon fennel seeds  
½ teaspoon black peppercorns  
1 large onion, quartered  
1 teaspoon salt  
300g fresh or dried thick rice noodles  
2 bunches choy sum (or any Chinese cabbage), washed well and cut into easy-to-eat pieces  
3 spring onions, green and white parts finely cut

Place the beef and spices, onion and salt into a large saucepan and cover the meat with water. Bring the water to just under the boil then reduce the heat to a gentle simmer. Cook for 2 hours or until the meat is very tender.

(This part of the process can easily be done well in advance so the meat can cool thoroughly overnight.)

Once the meat has cooled enough to handle, remove it from the stock and shred. Set aside.

Strain the liquid, discarding the onion and spices, return to the heat and bring to a simmer.

Cook the rice noodles according to the manufacturer's instructions (if using fresh rice noodles, blanch

them in boiling water to heat through then rinse in hot water).

Divide the noodles among 6 deep bowls. Add the choy sum to the beef broth and cook for 1-2 minutes or until just wilted and softened. Top the noodles with the beef. Place the cabbage to one side then ladle some of the beef stock over. Top with a good handful of spring onion and serve immediately.

## UGHUR BEEF WITH WHOLE CUMIN SEEDS & CAULIFLOWER

**SERVES 6 WITH OTHER DISHES**

Coming from the Mongolian steppes originally, the once-nomadic Uighur (pronounced "wee-gur") people have an interesting cuisine that mixes many influences from those who passed their settlements along the Silk Road. In larger cities you see their influence in the spiced kebabs and cumin seed-studded breads available from roadside stalls, makeshift kitchens and mere holes in the wall.

The use of spices such as cumin and fennel doesn't feel at all out of place to your taste buds alongside these dishes, which feel more like they come out of a Middle Eastern kitchen than a Chinese one. The mix of styles works harmoniously and I enjoy the way they bring different notes to a meal of various dishes, combining more of the ethnic groups of China than just the Han.

Using a cheaper cut of beef makes this a very economical dish, but you must treat the beef carefully so it doesn't toughen up. Cutting the meat across the grain and quick cooking are the key. The meat is initially cooked just until it begins to brown, then it's removed. It is returned to the wok just at the end of the cooking process to mix together with the vegetables and juices. This keeps the meat succulent and tasty.

400g beef skirt steak or flank steak, cut very finely across the grain  
3 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed  
1cm piece ginger, peeled and finely sliced  
1 tablespoon dark Chinese soy sauce

½ teaspoon white sugar  
½ teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoons cumin seeds, toasted in a dry pan for 20 seconds or until just browned  
1 dried red chilli, very finely sliced  
½ cauliflower, florets removed and sliced into pieces small enough to pick up with chopsticks  
sugar to taste  
1 tablespoon cornflour  
1 spring onion, roots removed and white and green parts finely sliced diagonally

In a bowl, mix the beef, garlic, ginger, soy sauce, sugar, salt, cumin seeds and chilli together well. Allow to marinate for at least 20 minutes.

Heat a wok to very hot and add a little oil. Add the marinated beef and press it out flat against the bottom of the wok in a single layer. Turn the beef once then remove immediately from the wok and set aside.

Return the wok to the heat. Add the cauliflower and ½ cup water. Place a lid on the wok and steam for 3 minutes. Remove the lid and add the beef and any liquid that has accumulated. Mix well and taste to check the seasoning, adding sugar and/or salt if necessary.

Mix the cornflour with just enough water to make a thin paste then mix it into the beef and cauliflower, and allow the sauce to bubble for 1 minute. Add the spring onion, mix well and tip out on to a platter. Serve immediately.

## GARLIC PORK MEATBALLS WITH CELERY

**SERVES 6 WITH OTHER DISHES**

This is a classic Cantonese stir-fry that uses two cooking steps to keep the meatballs really succulent.

To get good-textured meatballs that aren't dry, it is important to use pork mince that has a decent quantity of fat through it. If it is too lean it will be very dry.

If you can't find mince with a good amount of fat, buy some good-quality pork belly and mince it at home in a food processor. A mix of shoulder meat and belly will also be good if you want something a little leaner.





UIGHUR BEEF WITH WHOLE  
CUMIN SEEDS & CAULIFLOWER





**GARLIC PORK MEATBALLS WITH CELERY**

Celery is underrated in New Zealand. It is grown in abundance, but seems to be seen just as a soup ingredient or snack food. Cooked well, it retains its crunch and colour, and makes a fantastic addition to a stir-fry. Its taste remains neutral, making the focus of the dish the meat element.

500g fatty pork mince  
2 teaspoons salt  
1 teaspoon sugar  
2 teaspoons light Chinese soy sauce  
4 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed  
grapeseed oil for frying  
½ bunch celery, trimmed and cut diagonally into bite-sized lengths  
¼ cup water

In a bowl, mix the pork mince with half the salt, sugar, soy sauce and half the garlic. With slightly wet hands,

take small pieces of the mixture and roll them lightly in the palm of your hands to make balls about 2cm in diameter. Do not roll them tightly as this makes them firm when cooked. Place them in a deep bowl that fits inside a large saucepan for steaming.

Fill the saucepan with several cups of water and place the bowl of meatballs inside. Place on a high heat, cover and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for 10-12 minutes. The meatballs need to be just cooked through but no more.

Remove from the heat and remove the bowl from the pan. Allow to cool.

Once cool enough to handle, drain the accumulated liquid from the meatballs and reserve.

Separate the meatballs from each other, being careful not to break them up. Heat a wok to a high heat. Add a

little grapeseed oil and the remaining salt and garlic. Stir-fry for 1 minute then add the meatballs, stir-fry for 1 minute then add the celery and reserved steaming liquid from the meatballs, as well as the water.

Cover and cook for 1-2 minutes, just enough to heat the celery through, but do not overcook and allow to soften. Remove the lid and allow the liquid to reduce for a further 1-2 minutes. Tip out on to a platter and serve immediately.

## **RED SNAPPER WITH FRAGRANT TOMATO**

**SERVES 6 WITH OTHER DISHES**

Inspired by the Dong people of China, this dish would traditionally use a freshwater fish due to the distance this minority group lives from the sea, but any whole white-fleshed fish will work or use fillets, as I have here. Adjust the steaming time for a whole fish to 12-15 minutes, depending on the thickness.

Using skin-on fillets helps to hold the flesh on the fish once it has cooked. This is optional and if you are buying pre-filleted fish, you may not have the option. Freshness plays a large role in the texture of the flesh of fish, so when possible buy a whole fish and have it filleted for you. I like red snapper as it is much cheaper than most white-fleshed fish but has a good clean taste.

Salting the fish for a period of time firms the flesh and makes it a little more salty. As is typical with food from rice-producing areas, rice is the focus of the meal, with the dishes acting merely as small accompanying tastes. Rich, strong flavours or salty tastes satisfy the palate in small amounts.

### **For the fish**

3-4 red snapper fillets, skin on  
2 teaspoons fine table salt  
3cm piece fresh ginger, peeled and cut into fine matchsticks

Wash the fillets well and pat dry then lay out flat on a tray and sprinkle with the salt, turning each fillet so the salt is evenly dispersed over the flesh. Refrigerate for up to 1 hour.





RED SNAPPER WITH FRAGRANT TOMATO





Rinse the salt off the fish under running water and pat dry. Place the fillets in a shallow bowl and top with the ginger. The fish will create a bit of liquid as it cooks so the bowl needs to be deep enough to catch this.

Place the bowl in a steamer or, if you don't have a steamer, fill a large saucepan with several inches of water then place the bowl in the saucepan. Make sure the lid fits tightly.

Place the covered steamer or saucepan over a high heat and bring to the boil then reduce the heat to a simmer for 8 minutes. Remove from the heat. Carefully remove the fillets from the steamer or bowl and place on a large platter, keeping as much ginger on the fish as you can. Reserve a little of the steaming liquid for the sauce and discard the rest.

#### **For the sauce**

grapeseed oil for frying  
2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed  
1 teaspoon black peppercorns, freshly crushed  
500g cherry tomatoes, halved  
handful fresh coriander leaves

Start this 2-3 minutes before the fish is finished cooking. In a frying pan, heat a little oil and gently fry the garlic on low heat until just starting to brown.

Add the peppercorns, cherry tomatoes and 2 tablespoons of the fish steaming liquid.

Cook for 2-3 minutes or until the tomatoes have softened but not broken down. Add half the coriander leaves and mix well then spoon the sauce over the fish. Garnish with the remaining coriander leaves and serve immediately.

### **HEARTY PORK HOTPOT WITH NEW POTATOES**

**SERVES 6 WITH OTHER DISHES**

A delicious stew in a style similar to those made with yak meat in Tibet. I enjoy this with a variety of vegetables – whatever I have in the fridge – but the quality of meat is important to get a nice clean and rich flavour. Try this also with chicken on the bone or lamb. And the pumpkin adds real sweetness and great colour, but you could use carrots, parsnips or turnips.

I cook this in a clay pot available from any Chinese supermarket for about \$15. Sometimes called sand pots, they are glazed on the inside and sometimes have wire supports. They can be used for slow-cooking in the oven, over a gas ring or on a ceramic or standard element. They do not react well to sudden changes in temperature and crack if taken from the fridge and put straight on high heat so heat them slowly. I also use mine for serving soups at the table.

400g skinned belly pork, cut into 1cm cubes  
4cm piece ginger, peeled and cut into small cubes  
2 tablespoons light Chinese soy sauce  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon sugar  
grapeseed oil for frying  
3 dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked in warm water until softened then finely sliced (reserve the soaking water)

200g-300g piece pumpkin, peeled and cut into 2cm cubes  
10 small new potatoes, washed well sugar to taste  
1 bunch spinach leaves, well washed and stalks removed

In a bowl mix the pork, ginger, soy sauce, salt and sugar together.

Heat a little oil in a heavy-based casserole with a tight-fitting lid (or a clay pot) and brown the pork well over a high heat. Add the shiitake mushrooms, pumpkin and potatoes, and cover with water. Cover and reduce the heat to a simmer. Cook for 60 minutes or until the pork is very soft. Remove the lid and check for seasoning, adding salt and/or sugar if necessary.

Increase the heat slightly to help reduce the liquid a little. I enjoy this quite wet and soupy but reduce to your own liking.

Add the spinach and mix well just before serving. 🍴

Credits: Fold lamp by Alexander Taylor for Established and Sons, antique bridge playing cards, Baileys enamel teapot and mugs from Simon James Design at The Department Store; Rosenthal Tac shallow bowl and Rosenthal Moon pasta bowl from The Studio of Tableware; Rachel Carley yellow and green bowls from Sabato; blue and green bowls from Nest. For full details, see Credits Index.



# za'atar

**T**hroughout the Middle East za'atar (sometimes written as zaatar, za'tar, zatar) is eaten on a daily basis. The Arabic word for a type of wild thyme, it also refers to a seasoning mix containing the herb. There is some question as to the thyme's provenance – some believe it is a Syrian hyssop (and similar to oregano), others that it is closer to summer savory or marjoram. Often you will find recipes for za'atar with some or all of these herbs.

In its simplest form za'atar is made from dried thyme, toasted sesame seeds and salt. The blends and spices vary depending on where in the Middle East you are. In Lebanon the dried crushed red berries known as sumac are often added, sometimes with the addition of dried orange peel. In Syria sumac, cumin, paprika and chilli may be used. Palestinian versions may include caraway, while Israeli versions sometimes add dill and garlic. Jordanian za'atar may also include spearmint.

In any case, whichever style blend you use, it is best matched to flavours that are either strong enough to handle the spice mix – such as olives, feta, salmon, fish, lamb and beef.

## BASIC ZA'ATAR

**1/4 cup dried wild thyme (or combine  
2 tablespoons thyme with  
2 tablespoons oregano)**  
**1/4 cup toasted sesame seeds**  
**2 tablespoons sumac (available from  
specialty food stores)**  
**1 teaspoon sea salt**

Mix all the ingredients together and store in an airtight container.

● Throughout Lebanon the breakfast flatbread *mankoushe* is spread lavishly with za'atar and olive oil before baking like pizza. Or try smearing *labneh* (yoghurt cheese, available at good food stores and supermarkets) on pita bread and sprinkle with za'atar and olive oil – roll up and eat.

- A mix of za'atar and sumac is delicious sprinkled over lightly oiled salmon or thick meaty fish pieces, seasoned with salt and either panfried or baked (pictured below).
- Warm olives over a low heat with a little olive oil until heated through and sprinkle with za'atar just before serving.
- Roll *labneh* in za'atar and serving with crisp thin bread or crackers with drinks.
- Panfry skin-on, boned chicken thighs in oil, weighing down the chicken with a plate and saucepan so the skin becomes very crisp. Just before serving, sprinkle generously with za'atar and serve with wedges of lemon.
- Try sprinkling za'atar over lamb cutlets, chicken pieces or vegetables before grilling or roasting \*

■ GINNY GRANT





# course you can do it<sup>®</sup>

Jo Pearson prepares a simple yet impressive three-course dinner for six

## shopping

### GROCERIES

dairy: butter, milk and mascarpone  
cider vinegar

eggs

oil: canola and extra virgin olive

fennel seeds

honey

peas

pine nuts

self-raising flour

sugar

white wine vinegar

### MEAT & SEAFOOD

flat-sliced pancetta

pork fillet

New Zealand scallops

### FRESH PRODUCE

brown and red onions

garlic

Granny Smith apples

lemons, limes and oranges

red cabbage

shallots

thyme

zucchini

### ALCOHOL

dry sherry

white wine

## STARTER

### SEARED SCALLOPS WITH SAUTÉED ZUCCHINI & PINE NUT & PEA CRUSH

1 small brown onion, diced  
canola oil for frying  
2 tablespoons dry sherry  
500g peas, blanched for 1-2 minutes  
100g pine nuts, toasted  
1 teaspoon white wine vinegar  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil,  
plus extra for drizzling  
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper  
3 tablespoons butter, plus extra  
for the scallops  
4 shallots, peeled and finely sliced  
3 medium zucchini, cut into thin strips  
2 tablespoons white wine  
36 scallops

For the crush, in a frying pan sauté the onion in canola oil over a low heat until transparent. Add the sherry then place in a large mortar (or in a bowl and use a potato masher) with the peas, pine nuts, vinegar and olive oil. Pound until everything is crushed together then taste and season well.

In a large pan, melt the butter and fry the shallots until golden. Add the zucchini and cook for 1 minute then add the wine, toss and set aside. In a clean, hot frying pan, fry the scallops in a little butter and oil for 30 seconds on each side then season. Arrange the zucchini on warm plates, top with the crush and scallops, and drizzle with extra virgin olive oil.

Wine Sauvignon Blanc

## MAIN

### PANCETTA-WRAPPED PORK FILLET & BRAISED RED CABBAGE

2 tablespoons chopped thyme leaves  
1 tablespoon fennel seeds,  
toasted and ground  
salt and freshly ground black pepper  
3 pork fillets, cleaned of surface sinew  
15 very thin slices pancetta  
canola oil for frying  
2 red onions, finely sliced  
4 cloves garlic, crushed  
2 Granny Smith apples, peeled  
and diced  
1 tablespoon sugar  
¼ cup cider vinegar  
50g butter  
1 red cabbage, finely sliced  
1 teaspoon cracked white pepper  
1 teaspoon sea salt

Combine half the thyme, the fennel, and salt and pepper, sprinkle over the pork and rub in well. Tightly wrap the pancetta around the pork, securing with toothpicks if necessary. Allow to come to room temperature before cooking. Preheat the oven to 190°C.

In a medium-hot frying pan, brown the pork all over in a little oil then roast for 15 minutes until the juices run light pink to transparent when you insert a skewer. Allow to rest for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, fry the onions, garlic and remaining thyme in a large saucepan. Add the apples, sugar, vinegar and butter, and cook until the apples are tender. Add the cabbage and cook until soft but firm to the bite. Taste and season. Slice the pork and serve on the braised cabbage.

Wine Pinot Noir

## DESSERT

### LEMON-SCENTED FRITTERS WITH CITRUS SUGAR

5 free-range eggs  
250ml milk  
4 tablespoons honey  
finely grated zest of 5 lemons  
2 cups self-raising flour  
½ cup caster sugar  
finely grated zest of 2 limes  
finely grated zest of 1 orange  
mascarpone to serve

For the batter, whisk together the eggs, milk, honey and zest of 3 lemons. Slowly sift in the flour and whisk until smooth. Leave to rest while you make the citrus sugar.

Combine the remaining ingredients with the zest of the other 2 lemons and pulse in a food processor until the zest is as fine as sugar grains.

Add good-quality vegetable oil to a large saucepan to a depth of 5cm, heat to 175°C and fry dessertspoonfuls of the batter until golden.

Drain on paper towels and roll immediately in the citrus sugar. Serve with mascarpone.

Wine Noble Riesling 🍷

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT

Credits: All props privately owned.

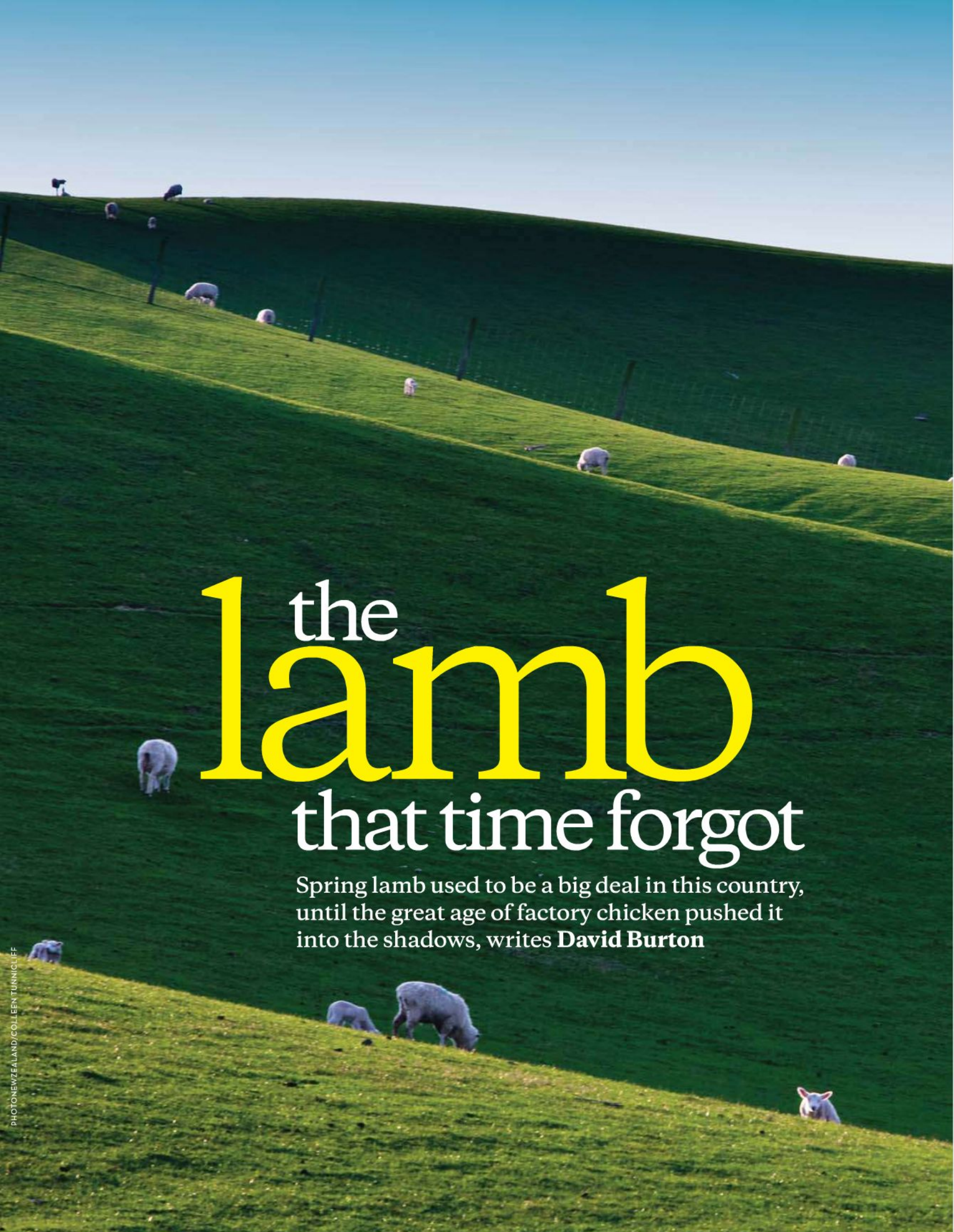




## tips

- ▶ If fresh scallops are out of season, the zucchini and crush go well with any white fish.
- ▶ Having the pork at room temperature before cooking will ensure the meat cooks evenly. Remove the pork from the oven when it is still slightly pink, as it continues to cook while resting.
- ▶ Change the flavour of the fritters by substituting ground cinnamon or ginger for the zest. Poached fruit, a sweet sauce or ice-cream are great partners for the fritters.





# the 1 lamb that time forgot

Spring lamb used to be a big deal in this country, until the great age of factory chicken pushed it into the shadows, writes **David Burton**





**M**odern consumers treat lamb as a commodity – like butter or cheddar – they expect it to taste the same all year round. But lamb’s flavour changes. As we move through spring and summer and into autumn, it becomes subtly stronger.

For mildness, there’s nothing like spring lamb. It’s also paler and calls for equally delicate accompaniments, such as the artichokes and broad beans that also appear in spring. By the same token, it is too mild for bossy seasonings, and autumn is probably the best time to begin studding a leg with slivers of garlic and small sprigs of rosemary.

At one time, spring lamb was a big deal in New Zealand. Rod Slater, a former butcher, recalls that, as late as the 1960s, butchers would get out with their whiting and paintbrushes

each October and emblazon their shop windows with the message “Spring lamb has arrived”. Rod recalls: “It used to come dressed differently, too, with a thin membrane of fat left on the underbelly.”

Perhaps the time to celebrate spring lamb has come again, now that insipidity has overtaken the modern palate. From the 1970s, Kiwi tastes turned sweeter and lighter. Fat became a swear word, fish became trendy, baby vegetables captured the imagination of chefs and chicken took over as our everyday meat.

It’s a paradox of modern New Zealand that we are open to whiffy cheeses and spicy, ethnic cuisines as never before, yet have quite lost our ancestral taste for hearty offal, hogget and mutton.

The arcane system of coloured stripes and dots that used to indicate

whether a carcass was lamb, hogget, ewe mutton or wether mutton has now passed into history, and most New Zealanders under 30 could probably not even tell you that hogget is a one-year-old sheep that has had its first two incisor teeth cut through its gums (under ones are lambs and mutton is from sheep two and over).

Yet Slater recalls that, as late as the 1990s, his sales of hogget and lamb were roughly equal, since many New Zealanders preferred the stronger taste of hogget.

“Many rural New Zealanders still do prefer hogget,” says Ohariu Valley farmer Greg Best, “though its excessive fattiness can be a problem.”

Mutton is stronger still, yet our Victorian forebears relished the flavour, possibly because their palates were already conditioned to the robust flavours of cheese, butter and





## Perhaps, like Prince Charles, you actually prefer the flavour of mutton to lamb, and consider it a form of game

unpasteurised milk kept in safes without refrigeration. Their noses were also accustomed to the stench of long drops and open sewers.

While the modern move to lamb has largely been consumer-driven, the trend suits the farmer very nicely.

For a farming perspective, the ideal time to slaughter a lamb is when it is eight to 12 weeks old. Due to a combination of mother's milk and lush spring pasture, the animal will have gone through its fastest growth spurt.

To continue the supply of fresh lamb, some animals will be kept over the summer and into autumn but, according to Meat & Wool New Zealand chairman Mike Petersen, their weight gains slow dramatically –

typically from 300 grams a day during spring to 100 grams a day once they are weaned from their mothers and have to live off the dry, meagre pasture of summer.

Having spent the summer eating grass, the lamb will have become a true ruminant by the autumn and its meat will have a slightly earthier, more agricultural flavour.

According to some, cryptorchid (infertile males with undescended testes) lambs develop a yet stronger flavour. However, a study that was commissioned by Alliance Group indicated that even trained tasting panellists could not consistently tell whether, when it came to boys, they were eating the meat of a ram, a wether (castrated ram) or a

cryptorchid, and so the meat company continues to accept all these lambs, and ewe lambs, without distinction.

A more important influence on flavour is diet. For example, clover, whose proportion of pasture tends to grow over summer and autumn, produces in the lamb's rumen more of a substance associated with intense and undesirable flavours, skatole, than the grasses of spring.

And as for the gnarly collection of various fats in mutton, there's really no way to get rid of them through cooking. However, one flavour-boosting technique is to rub mutton liberally with vinegar and allow it to marinate for 20 minutes before washing it with plenty of water. This removes any lanolin transferred to the meat during skinning and improves overall flavour.

Perhaps, like Prince Charles, you actually prefer mutton to lamb, and consider it a form of game. This drove him in 2004 to found Mutton Renaissance to support British farmers struggling to sell their older animals. Celebrity chefs such as Jamie Oliver, Gary Rhodes and Marco Pierre White got behind the campaign, and mutton began appearing on the menus at The Ritz, The Ivy and Le Gavroche.

The trend has yet to spread to New Zealand restaurants, though nowadays you hear scattered reports of slow-cooked mutton appearing at fashionable dinner parties. One such home cook commented, however, that having gone to a specialist butcher to buy his leg of mutton, he then found it too big to fit into his small modern oven.

Like the sight of lamb's brains and sheep's tongues, the smell of mutton is distasteful to the modern consumer, who still buys meat, but doesn't want to be reminded of where it came from.

But really, the farmer has the last laugh, for you can be sure that all those beef- and pork-flavoured sausages squished into their neat plastic packs at the supermarket contain a high percentage of good old mutton. 🌿





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# IN A MERLOT TONE

Some great, assured Kiwi Merlots were discovered by our panel, but others seemed to suffer split personalities, writes Ralph Kyte-Powell



# MERLOT IS A GRAPE VARIETY WITH AN IDENTITY CRISIS.

Should it be light, soft and quaffable, designed for early drinking? Should it be rich, velvety, full-bodied and age-worthy? Merlot can be all these and more, which is why it still seems to confuse winemakers and wine drinkers across the world.

The light and juicy style is probably the most popular internationally. As made successfully in Chile, Italy, France, Australia, New Zealand and the US, it is a red wine that doesn't demand much thought - the sort of Merlot that Miles has such contempt for in the cult movie *Sideways*.

The more substantial Merlots have more in common with their Bordeaux cousin Cabernet Sauvignon - similar blackcurranty fruit, cedary notes and a certain leafiness.

In fact, its plummy depth and smoothness make it an ideal complement to the more austere

Cabernet Sauvignon in a blend and this is probably Merlot's greatest contribution to the world of wine.

Straight Merlot is capable of true greatness in its own right, though, and well-made examples are deserving of a place alongside the flagships of the wine world.

In our tasting, there was a broad sweep of styles, with plenty of the "international" quaffing type, bigger, richer examples and some truly high-quality wines.

However, a significant number of entries displayed problems of ripeness and varietal identity. It seems many winemakers here, like those in Australia and elsewhere, don't know which sort of Merlot they are trying to make.

In contrast, the producers of our top wines were assured and confident - let's hope their influence spreads.

Merlot still seems to confuse winemakers, but the producers of our top wines were assured and confident

## TASTING RESULTS

|                     |            |
|---------------------|------------|
| 5 STARS OUTSTANDING | 3          |
| 4½ STARS EXCELLENT  | 2          |
| 4 STARS VERY GOOD   | 13         |
| 3 STARS GOOD        | 15         |
| NO AWARD            | 77         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>        | <b>110</b> |

TOP

5

- ★★★★★ VIDAL MERLOT  
CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2008  
\$19.99
- ★★★★★ WILD ROCK GRAVEL  
PIT RED HAWKE'S BAY MERLOT  
MALBEC 2008 \$19.95
- ★★★★★ CHURCH ROAD  
HAWKE'S BAY MERLOT CABERNET  
SAUVIGNON 2008 \$26.95
- ★★★★★ VILLA MARIA RESERVE  
MERLOT 2008 \$49.99
- ★★★★★ COUPER'S SHED  
MERLOT CABERNET 2009 \$22.95

## BEST BUYS

Wines qualify for Best Buy if they offer an outstanding combination of quality and price.

- ★★★★★ VIDAL MERLOT CABERNET  
SAUVIGNON 2008 \$19.99
- ★★★★★ WILD ROCK GRAVEL PIT  
RED HAWKE'S BAY MERLOT MALBEC  
2008 \$19.95
- ★★★★ SACRED HILL MERLOT  
CABERNET 2009 \$16-\$20
- ★★★★ TRINITY HILL THE TRINITY  
2009 \$19
- ★★★★ VILLA MARIA PRIVATE BIN  
MERLOT 2009 \$18.99

## TASTING PANEL

Joining our regular panel chair John Belsham (left), winemaker-owner of Foxes Island Wines in Marlborough, were our Australian wine judge and writer, Ralph Kyte-Powell (centre), and Rod Easthope, chief winemaker for Craggy Range.





1

## TOP NZ MERLOT

★★★★★

**VIDAL MERLOT CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2008 \$19.99 (HAWKE'S BAY) 1-6**

This outstanding Merlot-driven red showcases how well the variety performs in Hawke's Bay. Given added structure by smaller amounts of Cabernet Sauvignon and Malbec, its nose offers an exquisite combination of dark ripe fruits, dried herbs, fruitcake and beefsteak. Seamless in the mouth, it shows effortless poise across the succulent palate, finishing with beautifully balanced fine tannins. A wine to serve with a sophisticated beef dish, perhaps a fillet with a rich sauce chasseur.



## TOP WINE PROFILE

## THE REBIRTH OF VIDAL

Anthony Vidal arrived in New Zealand from Spain in 1888 aged 22. In 1905 he established vines on his property in Hastings and the name Vidal has been a constant on the wine scene ever since.

The label survived the twisted, at times perilous, course taken by the country's wine industry during the 20th century, but the founding Vidal family relinquished ownership in 1972. Four years later Villa Maria bought the winery, heralding a new era.

Winemakers such as Kate Radburnd and Rod McDonald recharged the brand by producing wines of real quality, a standard sustained by the man currently at the winemaking helm, Hugh Crichton. His first vintage at Vidal was the standout 2007, which offered up superb quality across most varieties. Crichton's next vintage (which produced our top wine), though less heralded, has proven no step down.

"It wasn't as warm in 2008," he says. "The grapes got ripe, but not super-ripe. As a result the wines are more classical Hawke's Bay in style - positive herb notes, fragrant, with good acidity."

Crichton has a favourite beef stew into which he pours a couple of bottles of red wine, along with rosemary, thyme, mushrooms and other ingredients, to be slow-cooked for five hours. He can't think of a finer match for the Vidal Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon 2008. **JOHN SAKER**

5

2

**★★★★★ WILD ROCK GRAVEL PIT RED HAWKE'S BAY MERLOT MALBEC 2008****\$19.95 1-6**

From the famous Gimblett Gravels district, this intense red suits an old-fashioned Kiwi roast lamb perfectly, with its attractively pungent aromas of blackcurrant, cinnamon, vanilla and dark plum, ahead of a multi-layered mid-palate of pure fruit enhanced by taut tannins and a long finish.

BEST BUY



3

**★★★★★ CHURCH ROAD HAWKE'S BAY MERLOT****CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2008****\$26.95 1-5**

Chargrilled, herbed veal chops would find synergy with the beautiful purity of fruit in this fragrant wine, which is enlivened by lifted florals, dark fruit, spicy charred oak characters and an inky touch. The wine has a silky mouthfeel and a very long finish. [C]



## MERLOT ARISTOCRACY

Merlot's traditional role in Bordeaux was as a blending variety to add flesh and depth to Cabernet Sauvignon. Wines with high proportions of Merlot, like those from the sub-region of Pomerol, were pretty much ignored, even until the 1950s. With few exceptions, they weren't to be compared with the great Cabernet-based wines of the Médoc or even the Merlot Cabernet Franc blends of St Emilion.

Then American wine commentators, fashionistas searching for "difference" and a new wave of millionaires "discovered" Pomerol's soft, rich wines. The small plots of Merlot there became ultra-fashionable and prices went through the roof.

Now, a current vintage of Château Pétrus can retail for as much as \$NZ3500, while a Cabernet-dominant first growth Médoc such as Château Latour might fetch "only" around \$NZ1700.

Pétrus is now the stuff of Chinese billionaires (some are rumoured to have mixed it with Coca-Cola) and people like Russian multi-billionaire Roman Abramovich, whose party of six recently drank two bottles (at \$7000 a pop) as part of a \$67,000 lunch in a Madison Avenue, New York restaurant.

Merlot has certainly arrived.





**4 ★★★★★ VILLA MARIA RESERVE  
MERLOT 2008 \$49.99 (HAWKE'S BAY)**  
1-6

There's good fruit expression and concentration in this "big red" style. Rich and powerful enough for hearty braised oxtail, it has a ripe core of berry fruit and a flinty touch echoing the gravelly Hawke's Bay soils. There's also a slightly porty thing to it and a whisper of volatile acid, but it certainly doesn't lack robust character.

**5 ★★★★★ COUPER'S SHED  
MERLOT CABERNET 2009 \$22.95  
(HAWKE'S BAY) 1-5**

This new label offers lifted aromas of blackberry, liquorice, five spice and dark chocolate, introducing a plush, plummy mouthful of good concentration. Oak is well in the background and firm tannins underpin the palate in good balance. Try it with pink racks of lamb. [C]

**Straight Merlot  
is capable of  
true greatness  
in its own right  
and well-made  
examples are  
deserving of a  
place alongside  
the flagships of  
the wine world**



**★★★★ CHURCH ROAD CUVE  
MERLOT 2007 \$26.95 (HAWKE'S BAY) 1-3**

From warmer Hawke's Bay vineyard sites, this fleshy Merlot offers blackberry, briar and cola-like aromas. Dense fruit concentration camouflages the oak and gives the palate a chunky texture. The slightly rustic, farmyardy touch won't be to everybody's taste, but it does have complexity. [C]

**★★★★ DRYLANDS MERLOT 2009 \$21.99  
(MARLBOROUGH) 1-3**

A fragrant Merlot with a typical leafy hint of Marlborough in its plum and blueberry aromas, backed up by a light seasoning of toasty oak. It tastes smooth and friendly with middling body, good fruit intensity and soft tannins. A sociable red to sip with pasta. [A]

**★★★★ ESK VALLEY WINEMAKERS  
RESERVE MERLOT MALBEC CABERNET  
SAUVIGNON 2007 \$59.99  
(HAWKE'S BAY) 1-2**

Made from very low cropped Gimblett Gravels vines, this generous, toasty style combines scented, ripe plummy aromas with black olive and charry oak. There's a hint of the farmyard to it, but it has good depth of flavour and dense texture. Invite friends round, serve up a rustic braised-meat dish and you can't go wrong.

**★★★★ KIM CRAWFORD SMALL  
PARCELS CORNER 50 MERLOT 2008 \$33  
(HAWKE'S BAY) 1-4**

This silky textured wine has plenty of character. Floral and sappy overtones mix it with raspberry and plum fruit, while a goodly measure of cedary oak sits in the background. There's good depth of flavour and the balance in the mouth makes it easy drinking right now. A wine with the flavour and textural qualities to suit traditional French coq au vin perfectly. [A]

**★★★★ MATUA HAWKE'S BAY  
MERLOT CABERNET 2009 \$17.99-\$21.99  
1-3**

This straightforward young Merlot Cabernet blend of good varietal character is light enough to serve with either grilled chicken or quail. Red berry and floral elements track through a palate of attractive fresh flavour. One panellist thought it "a little clinical", but all agreed it was pleasantly pluggable and well priced. [B]

**★★★★ SACRED HILL MERLOT  
CABERNET 2009 \$16-\$20  
(HAWKE'S BAY) 1-2**

From Sacred Hill's well-known orange-label starter range of wines, this isn't a heavy Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon, but it does have attractive opulence and presence. Plum and spice mark a vibrantly fruity nose, and the palate continues the succulent plummy theme with good persistence and some light astringency at the end. Excellent value.







## POPULAR CHOICE

For most wine lovers, Bordeaux and Cabernet Sauvignon go together like well – Burgundy and Pinot Noir, but in fact the most widely planted red grape in Bordeaux is Merlot. Many Bordelais find Merlot's earlier-ripening traits make it an easier proposition than Cabernet – it performs better in cooler years and its round, less tannic wines are easier to present to a public that increasingly likes to drink its wines young.

### ★★★★ SELAKS WINEMAKER'S FAVOURITE MERLOT CABERNET 2008 \$20.99 (HAWKE'S BAY) 1-3

From a warmer part of Hawke's Bay, this is a well-structured wine with blackberry, spice, black olive and light, sweet barrel-ferment aromas. While the palate isn't heavy, it has density, with layered, attractive texture, berry fruit and mineral notes, spicy oak and soft tannins. [A]

### ★★★★ SPY VALLEY MERLOT MALBEC 2008 \$19.90-\$22.90 (MARLBOROUGH) 1-4

Spy Valley's take on Merlot Malbec is a fruity wine of warmth and presence with redcurrant and plum aromas, touched by mocha oak. It was a little too leafy for one taster, but the others liked its balance and intensity, and the savoury chalky tannins that support the palate. Try it alongside minute steak with fines herbes.

★★★★ SQUAWKING MAGPIE GIMBLETT GRAVELS THE NEST MERLOT CABERNET MALBEC 2007 \$39.95 (HAWKE'S BAY) 1-2  
Perhaps the best of the 2007s, The Nest is a generously built, well-made wine of complexity and style, great to sip with spring lamb. It has forward, ripe fruit in a blackcurrant and plum vein, a savoury hint of dry undergrowth and a classy lick of oak. The well-focused flavours are balanced, with an appetising dry finish.

### ★★★★ THORNBURY MERLOT 2008 \$19.99 (HAWKE'S BAY) 1-2

This well-priced Merlot is a bit reserved on the nose at first. However, plummy fruit fills the mouth, there's an earthy, wild thread through it and overall it has a lively, friendly personality.

### ★★★★ TRINITY HILL THE TRINITY 2008 \$19 (HAWKE'S BAY) 1-3

The trinity in question – Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc – gives this attractive wine its lovely fruit expression. Floral, leafy aromas and raspberry fruit are woven through skilfully measured barrel ferment, and it tastes smooth, yet fresh, with firm acidity.

### ★★★★ VIDAL RESERVE MERLOT CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2007 \$29.99 (HAWKE'S BAY) 3-10

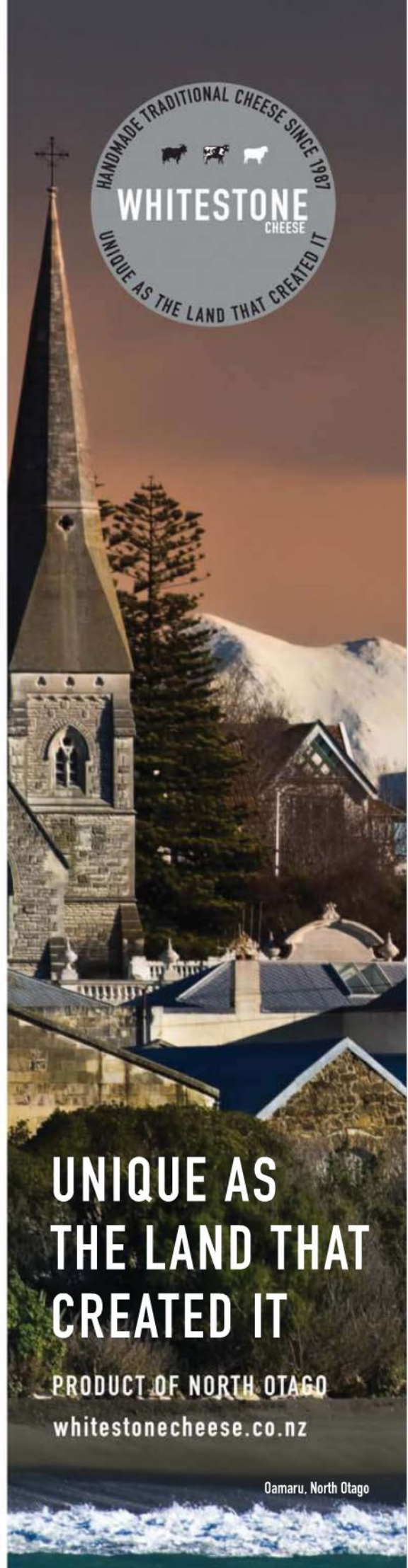
An austere style – one judge said "rigid" – that caused some discussion. Sweet red plum, mulberry and spice aromas precede a robust palate backed by big, taut tannins. Will it mellow over time? Probably, but it will always be a firmer, drier style.

### ★★★★ VILLA MARIA PRIVATE BIN MERLOT 2009 \$18.99 (HAWKE'S BAY) 1-3

Villa's Private Bin range consistently provides great value and varietal personality. Good with charcuterie, this light, fruity Merlot is very fresh and juicy. Sap, plum and floral aromas lead through succulent flavour, balanced with soft tannins for easy drinkability. \*

For complete wine-tasting listings visit [cuisine.co.nz](http://cuisine.co.nz) (three-star results are listed only on the website)

To source wines listed, contact the distributor (listed by letter):  
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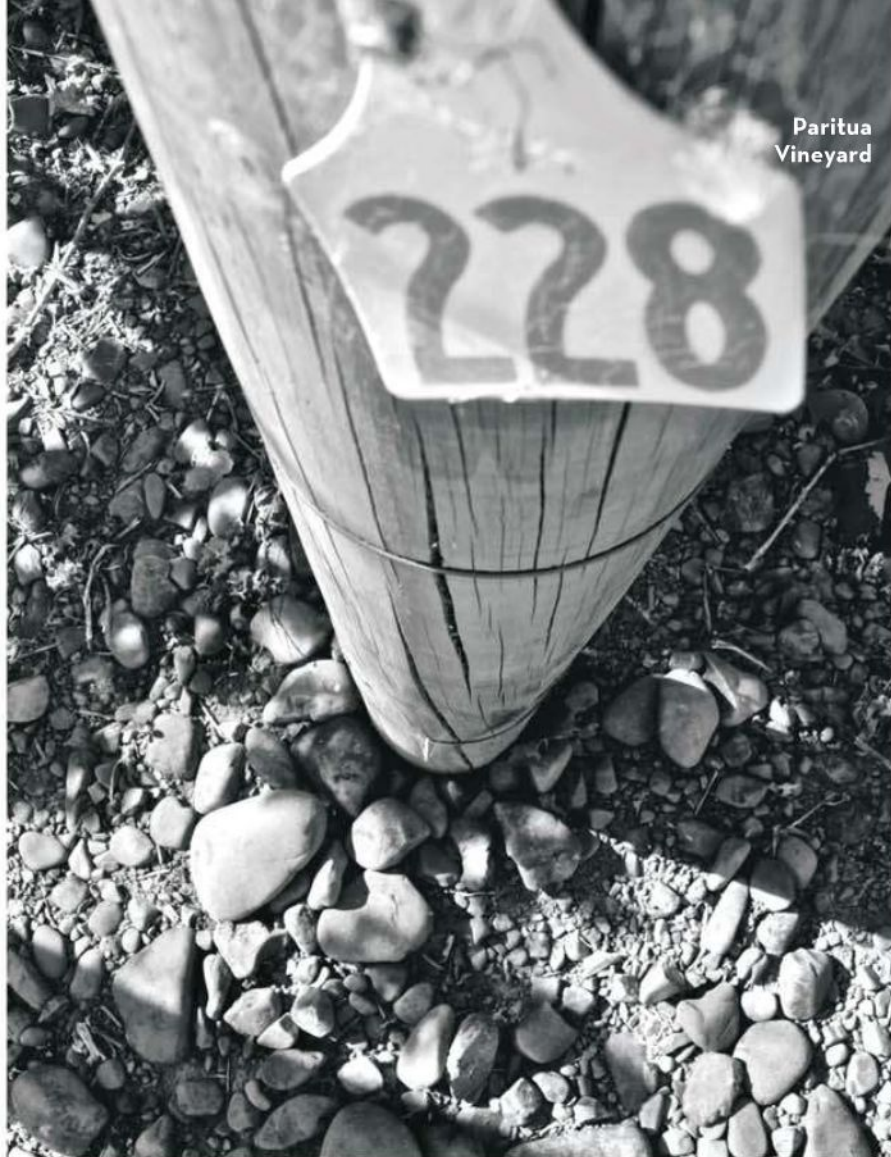


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Paritua  
Vineyard

TOP

5

- 1 ★★★★★ CHURCH ROAD CUVE  
CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2007  
\$26.99
- 2 ★★★★★ PARITUA RED 2007  
\$36.50
- 3 ★★★★★ MISSION JEWELSTONE  
CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2008  
\$33-\$38
- 4 ★★★★★ VILLA MARIA RESERVE  
CABERNET SAUVIGNON MERLOT  
2008 \$49.99
- 5 ★★★★★ BABICH THE PATRIARCH  
2007 \$55-\$60

BEST  
BUYS

Wines qualify for Best Buy if they offer an outstanding combination of quality and price.

★★★★★ CHURCH ROAD CUVE  
CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2007 \$26.99

★★★★ COOPERS CREEK SV HAWKE'S  
BAY CABERNET SAUVIGNON GIMBLETT  
GRAVELS 2007 \$26-\$29

★★★★ COOPERS CREEK SV HAWKE'S  
BAY CABERNET SAUVIGNON MERLOT  
GIMBLETT GRAVELS 2007 \$26-\$29

# CABERNET FEVER

They're ripe, they're classy and they're ours. **Ralph Kyte-Powell** applauds New Zealand's new breed of Cabernet Sauvignon

**N**ew Zealand's red wines are building quite the reputation. Syrah is the new darling and Pinot Noir the most talked-about Kiwi red here and overseas, but Cabernet Sauvignon and the Bordeaux-style wines it is often made into (often as part of a blend with Merlot and/or Malbec) still occupy an important place on the New Zealand wine spectrum.

It may not be as trendy these days but Cabernet was a significant Kiwi grape long before its more popular rivals. Today's wines are very different from those earliest incarnations: as winemakers have become more familiar with the demands of this variety, Cabernet

Sauvignon has improved in leaps and bounds. Efforts with Cabernet are now especially centred on the warm-climate region of Hawke's Bay. An increase in vine age has also had a beneficial impact.

Its traditional Bordeaux blending partner, Merlot, has also grown in importance, reflecting its greater suitability to a broader range of climates, though its current heartland is also in sunny Hawke's Bay.

The result is a new crop of Cabernets and blends that stands tall among the greats of the world. Our top Cabernet Sauvignons show how fine these wines can be and, as a bonus, there are some real bargains in the mix.

## TASTING RESULTS

|                     |           |
|---------------------|-----------|
| 5 STARS OUTSTANDING | 4         |
| 4½ STARS EXCELLENT  | 1         |
| 4 STARS VERY GOOD   | 6         |
| 3 STARS GOOD        | 6         |
| NO AWARD            | 23        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>        | <b>40</b> |

## TASTING PANEL

The New Zealand Merlot panel also did duty for New Zealand Cabernet Sauvignon: John Belsham led the tasting, joined by Ralph Kyte-Powell and Rod Easthope.



1

TOP NZ  
CABERNET

★★★★★

**CHURCH ROAD CUVE  
CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2007**  
\$26.99 (HAWKE'S BAY) 1-12

An attraction of this great Kiwi Cabernet is how it reveals more of itself as it breathes in the glass. Beginning reserved and closed up, it builds deep blackcurrant, blackberry, floral and cedary aromas with some earthy interest beneath. It has great texture and real presence in the mouth, yet it's not too heavy. The finish is ultra-long and fragrant, resting on the sort of tight tannins that will assure longevity. It needs richly flavoured, grand dishes, perhaps game such as hare, venison or wild boar. [A]



## TOP WINE PROFILE

## THE MOVE TO CUVE

Church Road's Cuve range of wines was launched back in 1994. Since then it has remained true to its founding idea: "Winemaker, stay off the beaten track!"

Says Church Road senior winemaker Chris Scott, "It's always been an experimental range. Because it consists only of varietal wines, we can try different things and really go exploring. For example, it gives us a chance to see how a single variety ages, which isn't possible with a blend."

Scott feels Hawke's Bay has been suffering from a bad rap for its Cabernet Sauvignon, which recent vintages - above all 2007 - should send packing once and for all. "That year was the best for Cabernet in the Bay since 1998. It gave us real ripeness and delicacy. As a result, wines such as Tom [Church Road's prestige Bordeaux blend] were Cabernet- rather than Merlot-dominant, which is unusual."

Perhaps surprisingly, Gimblett Gravels did not have the "exclusive" as the source of fruit for our top wine. "It's 50/50 - Gimblett Gravels and our Redstone Vineyard in the Ngatarawa Triangle," explains Scott. "Redstone gives us finer, velvety tannins, while the Gravels bring more density and robustness. Each is a great foil for the other."

Cuve series wines are not widely available. You'll find them in restaurants, fine-wine stores and at Church Road's cellar door.  **JOHN SAKER**

5

**2 ★★★★★ PARITUA RED 2007 \$36.50**  
(HAWKE'S BAY) 1-12

Paritua is a newer Hawke's Bay winery, but quality is already outstanding. The 07 Red, predominantly Cabernet and Merlot, perfectly balances softness with power - a classic "iron fist in a velvet glove". Concentrated blackcurrant character, toasty, cedary oak, smooth texture and a solid backbone give it near-faultless appeal. All it needs is a rare rib roast.

**3 ★★★★★ MISSION JEWELSTONE  
CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2008 \$33-\$38**  
(HAWKE'S BAY) 2-10+

Rather like a modern Bordeaux in style, this high-class Cabernet deserves a grand-occasion lamb dish. From Hawke's Bay's pioneering winery, it has the makings of a New Zealand classic and is rich, concentrated and expressive. Cassis, violet, cedar and tobacco meet on the nose and the layered, intense palate is long and ultra-elegant.



Our top Cabernets show how fine these wines can be and, as a bonus, some are real bargains

## CABERNET &amp; MERLOT GO WITH...

When talk turns to food matches for New Zealand's Bordeaux-style reds, you don't have to look far. Cabernet and Merlot with lamb are classic food and wine synergies. Lamb's sweetness is echoed in the blackcurranty flavours of Cabernet. Merlot's plummy fruit matches lamb's richness. And the leafy and sometimes minty "cut" of these wines is a perfect condiment for lamb's unctuous flavours.

Of course, Cabernet and Merlot, along with the other Bordeaux varieties of Malbec, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc, are also at home with other foods.

- ▶ Beef
- ▶ Game
- ▶ Spicy Middle Eastern chicken
- ▶ Roast chicken
- ▶ Pasta dishes
- ▶ Rich duck dishes (particularly Merlot)
- ▶ Rabbit (particularly Merlot)



# nz cabernet & blends

## 4 ★★★★★ VILLA MARIA RESERVE CABERNET SAUVIGNON MERLOT 2008

\$49.99 (HAWKE'S BAY) 2-10+

The Villa Maria label is as close to a guarantee of quality as you'll get, especially when the word Reserve is attached. Deep, vibrant and just right for the richness of venison, it has floral, black plum, mulberry and briar characters of delicious purity, dressed with plenty of cedary vanillin oak. Long and poised with a tight tannic backbone, it should age magnificently.



## 5 ★★★★★ BABICH THE PATRIARCH 2007 \$55-\$60 (HAWKE'S BAY) 2-10

Named in honour of winery founder Josip Babich, this Cabernet Sauvignon Malbec Cabernet Franc is a powerful wine, worthy of the cellar. Cassis and mixed berry notes meet spice and mocha on the nose, and the palate is warm, rich and densely textured. Needs time to blossom fully. Serve with rump steak.



## ★★★★★ CHURCH ROAD RESERVE CABERNET MERLOT 2007 \$36.95 (HAWKE'S BAY) 1-3

This soft, warm, juicy Cabernet shows why Church Road is a leading Hawke's Bay winery. It measures up beautifully to a roast of lamb with plenty of upfront berry and currant fruit character, and a savoury minty touch. There's no great depth in the mouth, but it has satisfying intensity and balance, with a slightly funky Bordeaux-like overtone and finely grained tannins. [A]

## ★★★★★ COOPERS CREEK SV HAWKE'S BAY CABERNET SAUVIGNON GIMBLETT GRAVELS 2007 \$26-\$29 1-5

A typically ripe, succulent New World style from Hawke's Bay. Ripe berries, plum, choc-mint and a dab of sweet oak mark the attractive nose, and it tastes clean and fruity with a juicy, blackcurrant Cabernet flavour that lingers long in the mouth.



## ★★★★★ COOPERS CREEK SV HAWKE'S BAY CABERNET SAUVIGNON MERLOT GIMBLETT GRAVELS 2007 \$26-\$29 1-4

Generosity of flavour and succulence are the hallmarks of this finely balanced Cabernet Merlot. Blackcurrant, plum and milk-chocolate aromas lead the way. It's not a big wine, but it has plenty of ripeness and character. Texture and balance are excellent, and it signs off with lovely fine tannins and a lip-smacking aftertaste.

## ★★★★★ CROSSROADS WINERY HAWKE'S BAY CABERNET SAUVIGNON 2007 \$35-\$40 1-4

There's a slight underripe/overripe conundrum in this wine but jammy fruit ripeness and dark-chocolate richness save the day. The ripe blackcurrant fruit holds well through the long, tasty palate, with some stemmy hints. Leafy, savoury Cabernets like this go well with lamb.

## ★★★★★ MUDBRICK VINEYARD VELVET 2008 \$105-\$110 (WAIHEKE ISLAND) 1-5

"Velvet" - the name describes the style this highly regarded winery aims at. And it hits a bull's-eye with this great partner for comfort food such as lamb pie. The nose is fruity and floral, and it has depth and lovely focus. It's concentrated, supple and warm, even-textured and long in flavour.

## ★★★★★ TRINITY HILL THE GIMBLETT 2008 \$34 (HAWKE'S BAY) 1-6

Cabernet is blended with Merlot, Petit Verdot, Malbec and Cabernet Franc in a dense wine with appetising blackcurrant, raspberry and floral aromas, and a savoury herby edge. Intense flavour, fine tannins and a whisper of grassiness.



## OTHER NZ REDS

Alongside the tastings of Cabernet Sauvignons and Merlots, our panellists judged an array of other New Zealand reds: fringe-dwelling, unorthodox, sometimes avant-garde varieties. While there's no question Kiwi Cabernets and Merlots can cut it with top-notch wines from just about anywhere, the verdict on the other reds was less flattering.

Cabernet Franc, Tempranillo, Malbec, Pinotage, Montepulciano, Sangiovese, Zweigelt, Dolcetto, St Laurent and Chambourcin were presented, both as straight varietals and in blends. Of 32 wines tasted only five earned three stars.

While New Zealand winemakers have over time found ideal spots to plant Pinot, Cabernet, Merlot and Syrah, nowhere near the same resources have been devoted to lesser red varieties. Some plantings are new, some experimental, and some have no history here. Many varieties don't have readily available international benchmarks. Nor are the prototypes always of the highest quality. It's a minefield for the unwary.

Promising wines came from Cabernet Franc, Tempranillo, Malbec and Montepulciano. But winemakers are a perseverant lot. We await developments. ☼



For complete wine-tasting listings visit [cuisine.co.nz](http://cuisine.co.nz)  
(three-star results are listed only on the website)

To source wines listed [A], contact Pernod Ricard NZ, ph: 09-336 8300

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## TASTING NOTES

★★★★★

Outstanding quality

★★★★☆

Excellent quality

★★★★

Very good quality

★★★

Good quality (website listings only)



Drink now, don't cellar



Drink now or cellar for up to two years from now



Not ready for drinking yet

**Tasting method** All wines are tasted blind. If, after discussion, the tasters do not agree on a star rating, the wine will receive the rating given by the majority but dissenting comments will be included in the wine notes. The scores of winemaker judges cannot exceed those of other judges.

**Availability** All wines entered in Cuisine tastings must be readily available at the time of publication. However, high demand and a six-week lead time between tastings and publication can affect availability. If you cannot find the wines, contact the winery or distributor direct.

**Prices** Suppliers are asked to provide a retail price range for all wines entered in tastings. Prices do vary between vineyard and low-to-high volume outlets and cannot, therefore, be guaranteed. All prices are quoted in \$NZ.

**Recommended by Cuisine stickers** Look for these top wines as your guarantee of quality.

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Akarua Home Block  
Vineyard and the  
Pisa Range beyond

# HOOK, WINE & SINKER

Lured as always by Pinot Noir, winemaker Matt Connell has landed at Akarua, writes John Saker

**M**att Connell is assuring me I'll catch a trout over the next five minutes. We're nearing one of his favourite spots, on the western side of Lake Dunstan. I'm not so sure. Fish are adept at avoiding me... I can't even remember the last time I caught one.

My guide knows a thing or two about it, though. Matt Connell has been a huntin', fishin' man for most of his life, which now spans 40 years. At one point during his younger days in Christchurch he entertained the idea of making this hobby his career.

It now serves as an escape from wine, a peaceful place where he can recharge and reconnect with his family when the annual madness of vintage subsides.

Connell is the winemaker-manager at Central Otago winery Akarua. It's a job he took on nearly two years ago, and both winery and winemaker are feeling they made a fine catch.

In 2001, Connell was 10 years into a career in hospitality. He'd run bars successfully in several countries but was eager for change. The opportunity to make a lateral leap



Matt Connell

came when David Evans-Gander at Waiheke Island's Passage Rock Wines took him on as a cellarhand-cum-vineyard-apprentice. A diploma in winemaking at Lincoln followed and Connell found himself in the fast-moving current of the wine industry.

He soon worked out the kinds of wine he wanted to make; Pinot Noir and Riesling were at the top of the list. And when his American wife Beth returned from a trip home with a bottle of Elk Cove Pinot from Oregon, he knew where he wanted to work next.

Elk Cove Vineyards is one of the original (fifth oldest) and enduring stars of the Oregon Pinot scene. Fisherman Connell brazenly put his hook in the water, sending Elk Cove winemaker Adam Godlee Campbell an email announcing his interest and availability. He was taken on as assistant winemaker.

Connell completed four vintages in Oregon, where his love of Pinot deepened. "I love the sexy allure of Pinot. It's subtle and hard to do well. I worked with 35-year-old vines in Oregon... that kind of vine age makes the wines more Medusa-like... they stop you in your tracks."



Akarua's new look at the cellar door



The family – by now there was Oregon-born Emma in the mix, soon to be followed by son Noah – moved back across the Pacific when Connell was offered the winemaking job at Olssens in 2005. He worked four vintages at the Central Otago winery, producing not only Olssens wines but several others under contract. His touch was deft; the wines he made won no fewer than 35 gold medals.

He sees the Akarua chapter, which began with the 2009 vintage, as the

complexity in the wines,” says Connell. “I think Central Otago generally has moved away from pure ‘fruit bomb’ Pinots.”

Akarua (which translates as “two vines”) was established in 1996 by the influential southern man and former long-serving Dunedin mayor Sir Clifford Skeggs on the Cairnmuir Rd section of Bannockburn. The largest family-owned winery in Central Otago, it was an early trendsetter. Winemaker Carol Bunn made her

**“I worked with 35-year-old vines in Oregon... that kind of vine age makes the wines more Medusa-like... they stop you in your tracks”**

logical next step. “A number of things excite me about this job. For one thing, I only have to concentrate on one label, so all my focus can be on our wines and our vines. Bannockburn is a special part of the Cromwell basin... its Pinots offer a great combination of power and elegance.”

Connell has been spending a lot of time in the vineyard, getting to know the site with Akarua viticulturist Gillian Wilson, who has been with the company seven years. Much of the vineyard tilts to the north and around 80 per cent of its gravelly schist is planted in Pinot Noir. The rest is Pinot Gris, Chardonnay and Riesling.

“We’ve taken crop levels down and already I think we’re seeing more

name with a number of sumptuous Akarua Pinots in the early noughties.

Recently, Sir Clifford’s son David took over as CEO of Skeggs’ business operations. Connell’s appointment is symptomatic of a move to revitalise Akarua. The wine label has been redesigned, new tanks and other equipment are being bought and – perhaps more significantly – the neighbouring seven-hectare Bannockbrae vineyard, planted in Pinot and regarded as one of central Otago’s finest, has been acquired.

“I almost went overboard when I heard that,” said Connell.

No, he’s still on board. But I think he’s finally given up any chance of my catching a fish. ☺

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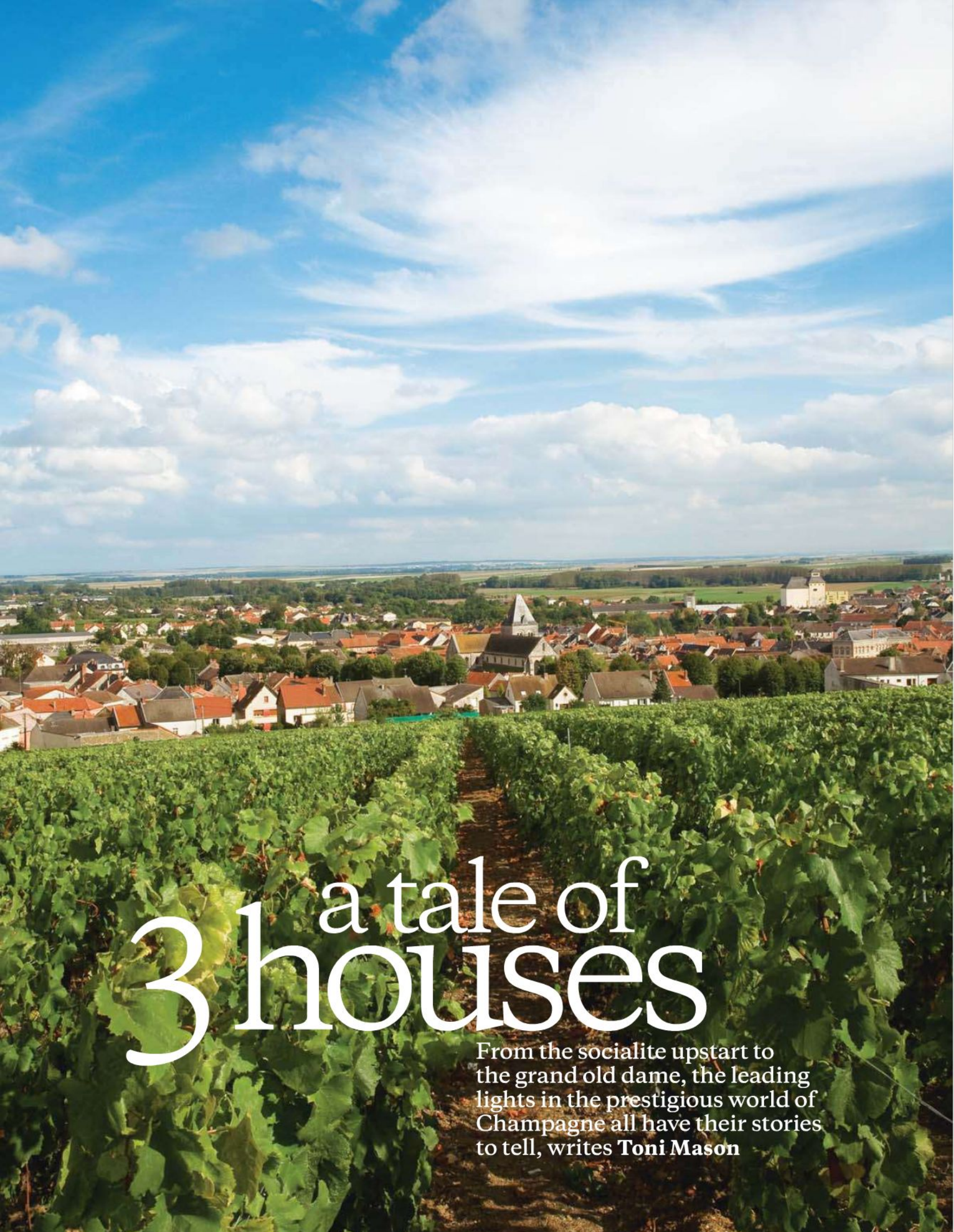
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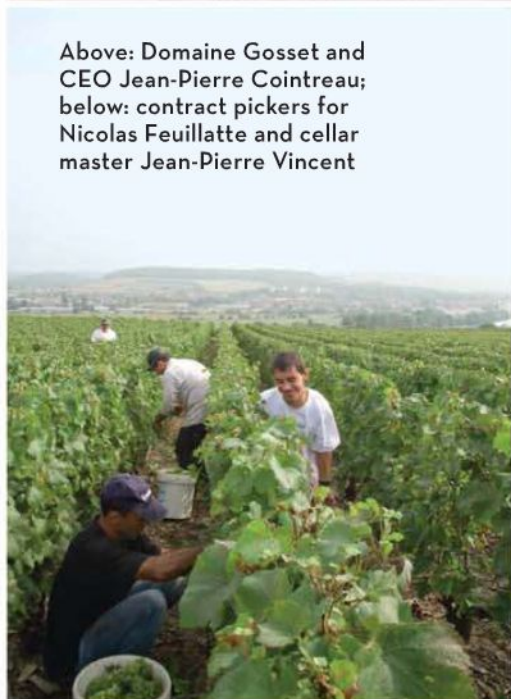
# 3 a tale of houses

From the socialite upstart to the grand old dame, the leading lights in the prestigious world of Champagne all have their stories to tell, writes **Toni Mason**





Above: Domaine Gosset and CEO Jean-Pierre Cointreau; below: contract pickers for Nicolas Feuillatte and cellar master Jean-Pierre Vincent



The pop of a Champagne cork, that most promising of sounds, may announce the start of a celebration, but it can also be the full point at the end of a long story. And in the world of Champagne, there are many stories and approaches to getting the luxury fizz in the bottle.

One of the youngest Champagnes in the world, Nicolas Feuillatte, was launched only in 1976 after Nicolas Feuillatte the man (a Parisian born into a wealthy social scene) tired of being the instant-coffee king of the US and bought a plot in Champagne. It's now the top-selling Champagne in France and third in the world.

Feuillatte soon made his mark when he launched the Réserve Particulière exclusively for his New York socialite friends like Lauren Bacall and Jackie Onassis, placing the brand firmly in a glamorous milieu.

Headquarters is the Centre Vinicole - Champagne Nicolas Feuillatte, just out of Épernay. In keeping with the youth of the label, it is über-modern and high-tech. A cooperative of more than 5000 growers, it is the largest union in Champagne.

The dimly lit futuristic caves hum with the whine of forklifts stacking thousands of pallets of bottles. On the walls hang large commissioned artworks, mostly by emerging talents.

Meanwhile, up in the bottling plant, the bottles are packed into cases by a highly choreographed team of robots.

A good 80 per cent of production is of the NV (non-vintage) Brut. "This is the house," says David Henault, deputy winemaker. "It is based on freshness, which is most important for me. It means you want another."

Being a cooperative is important to Nicolas Feuillatte, CEO Dominique Pierre says.

"The traditional houses, for historic reasons, take grapes from the same places. Nicolas Feuillatte has a broad palette, sourcing grapes from the entire region. We're not obsessed with volume, but the diversity of quality.



“What’s most important is that the person drinking it is enjoying it; that the person they drink it with is, too,” says Pierre. “Wine is not a story of money; it’s a story of passion.”

At the house of Duval-Leroy, one of the last decent-sized family-owned houses, it couldn’t be a more different story. Rather than getting its grapes from contract growers, it is one of the largest landowners in Champagne, with some 200 hectares of vines.

Based in the village of Vertus, the house is headed by formidable widow Carol Duval-Leroy, who has successfully run the label since her husband died.

It was established in 1859 when two businessmen joined forces, then marriage brought the families even closer together. When Carol’s husband Jean-Charles died in 1991 he would normally have passed the house to one of their sons, as had been done by the six previous generations. Carol, who was 36 when he died, told her

for the full 150 years. The present vines are about 50 years old, an age that helps give the wine complexity and maturity, with high acidity.

Duval-Leroy sees Champagne as a feminine wine, which is reflected in the name of her top wine, *Femme de Champagne*. And she sees her role as very suited to women. “You have wine, then you have to decide on everything around the bottles and labelling. And it is a very feminine taste. I think for these reasons more and more women will head houses.”

“If the men let them,” quips deputy managing director Michel Oliveira.

That’s probably another story, but Champagne’s longest tale is that of Gosset. The oldest wine house in the region, it was producing still wines before Champagne was invented (Ruinart is the oldest Champagne house but Gosset was quick to follow). It starts in 1854 with Pierre Gosset, alderman of Aÿ, a village in the Grande Vallée de la Marne, home

their flagship *Grand Réserve* was awarded the *Grappe d’Or* (wine of the year) by *Le Guide Hachette des Vins*, France’s top wine guide. A blend of three different vintages and aged for four years, its powerful structure and length combined with a delightful delicacy is considered a fine expression of the Gosset style.

Certain production methods create the distinctive qualities of Gosset Champagnes. Apart from the entry-level non-vintage *Excellence Brut*, the wines don’t undergo malolactic fermentation – often used elsewhere to reduce acidity quickly and allow earlier release, it also takes the natural fruitiness from the grapes.

Gosset lets the natural process of acidity reduction take its course, allowing the wines to keep more character. It also means the wines keep better, and retain more of the natural fruitiness of the grapes.

“We know we have very good Champagnes,” says Cointreau.

## “People must drink to have a better life and having good-quality wines helps them have a better life.” Jean-Pierre Cointreau

husband she’d carry on for their three boys, who were then too young.

At one time women weren’t allowed in wineries for fear they’d turn the wine bad, so it is some feat that she assumed control of the house and has built up the label to the extent that Duval-Leroy is ranked among the top 15 houses. And she is the first woman president of the UMC – the union of Champagne houses – and also the first to head up the Association Viticole Champenoise. No wonder this poised and petite woman has the air of one not to be crossed. She never wanted to head a Champagne, but now, “It’s a life I wouldn’t sell,” she says simply.

Her head winemaker is also a woman – another rarity. There are other women winemakers in France, but Sandrine Logette-Jardin is the only *chef de cave*, a cellar master responsible for the entire production.

The Chardonnay grapes that go in the Duval-Leroy Blanc de Blancs come from a 3.5-hectare plot, *Le Clos des Bouveries*, owned by the family

of Pinot Noir in the region, who made red wines from grapes harvested from his own vines. The house, now ranked among the top 10, was owned by the Gosset family up until it was bought in 1994 by Renaud-Cointreau, a group owned by a branch of the Cointreau family.

Their story, too, is of a long history of producing fine French drink: the great-great-great grandfather of the current generation created the eponymous liqueur in 1875, but before that many generations again devoted themselves to making fine cognac.

Gosset is a boutique producer of limited quantities (1.2 million bottles a year whereas big houses produce around 26 million). In a small team like Gosset, says CEO Jean-Pierre Cointreau, they can keep production on an artisanal level. “We keep the same kind of recipes, the same kind of art as our ancestors.”

Those arts seem to be doing the house proud. Last year, coinciding with the house’s 425th anniversary,

“And they have to be drunk at a good time and with the right food.”

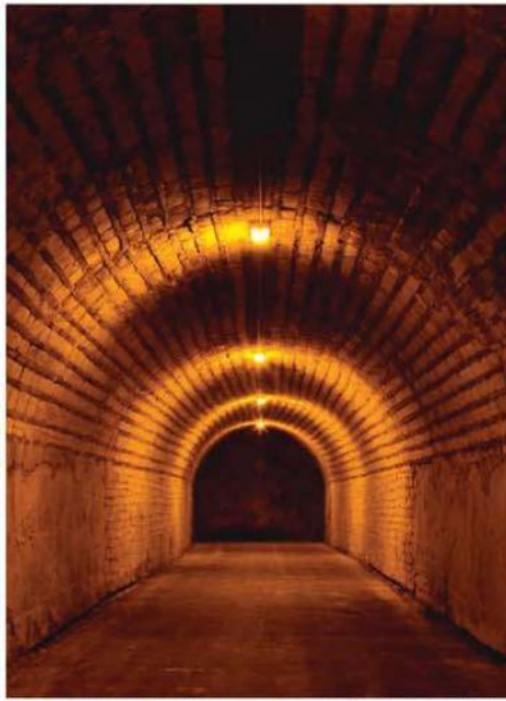
This highlights another distinctive characteristic of the wines: their fine bubbles, achieved by a long, slow, second fermentation. Larger bubbles interfere with the palate and they say this is one of the reasons Gosset Champagnes work well with food, a priority for a house that collaborates with top chefs such as Alain Ducasse, Michel Roux Jr and Ferran Adrià to create matched menus.

Last year also marked the first move from the original home in Aÿ (though that remains in use) to a château in nearby Épernay, near the Avenue de Champagne. The 1.5 kilometres of chalk-walled Champenoise caves snaking under the park surrounding the château will eventually be home to 2.5 million precious bottles.

It’s in a good cause. As Cointreau, says, “People must drink to have a better life and having good-quality wines helps them have a better life.” That makes for a happy ending. 🍷



Clockwise from right: Caves at  
Domaine Gosset; far right: Nicolas  
Feuillatte deputy winemaker David  
Henault; Avenue de Champagne,  
Épernay; Carol Duval-Leroy; Nicolas  
Feuillatte winery; Duval-Leroy poster





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# travel

Edited by Susan Buchanan

PHOTOGRAPH KIERAN SCOTT

The Millton  
Vineyard & Winery

CUISINE 147



# coup de table



San Francisco has produced a new generation of idealists and world-changers, but this time the revolution is all about food, writes **David Prior**





Happy Girl Kitchen, Ferry Plaza  
Farmers' Market; opposite:  
kitchen garden at Contigo

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PRUE RUSCOE



he fog-licked hills, idiosyncratically painted Victorian housing, rattling trams and the majestic Golden Gate are postcard familiar. But it is San Francisco's counter-culture ethos that perhaps most defines this city. This crammed peninsula at the very edge of the US has long been a magnet for revolutionaries and visionaries. Its creative, open and enterprising spirit has incubated pioneering social agendas from free speech and gay rights to Google and the organic movement.

The idea that delicious food should be seasonal, sustainable and locally sourced may not have originated in the wider Bay Area, but it was here it became a self-conscious, almost political act in the best tradition of the city's alternative roots. San Francisco now claims some 40 weekly farmers' markets, which, thanks to the region's blessed geography and the absurd northern Californian growing season, are flush with a staggering array of produce.

Yet the movement began not with farmers, but restaurants – the likes of Chez Panisse (opened 1971) and Judy Rodgers' beloved Zuni Café (1979) – that championed the purity and simplicity of local, organic ingredients. In so doing they ensured a livelihood for dozens of small farms dotting the periphery of the city and helped turn the Bay Area into one of the great eating destinations.

Alice Waters' Chez Panisse, the restaurant that started it all and placed San Francisco forever on the gastronomic map, is not in the city itself but across the bay in Berkeley. Next year it enters its fourth decade, an extraordinary achievement for any restaurant and made all the more remarkable because of its tumultuous and eccentric history.

Started by Waters and a group of idealistic, inexperienced bohemian students and activists from the Free Speech Movement, Chez Panisse has broken every rule of how a successful restaurant should run. Lurching from financial ruin to disaster to triumph and back again, it has become an American

institution for not only its simple food but its idealism.

Driven by Waters' unrelenting vision, Chez Panisse has built around it an unshakable food community that has in turn gone on to change Americans' relationship to food.

For about five days a year in July, the hand-hammered copper fruit bowl that is the final note of a meal at Chez Panisse is filled with a delicate pile of plump, unadorned mulberries. Not just any mulberries, they come from a single tree in Sonoma, as they have for years. Organic, hand-picked with stalks intact, the trays of the notoriously fragile fruit arrive at the restaurant in the fleeting moment when they are perfectly ripe to appear on the menu as "A Bowl of Byrne's Farm Mulberries".

Indeed, the restaurant's fruit bowl serves as a seasonal marker: January may see a branch of Jim Churchill's pixie tangerines, August a blushing nectarine from Frog Hollow Farm, and November, Frog Hollow's buttery Warren pear, whose only accompaniment is a wood-handled paring knife. This modest act of serving ingredients as they are and naming the farmer encapsulates the essence of Panisse.

Panisse has also acted as a kind of culinary training centre, producing scores of distinguished alumni who have taken its philosophy and aesthetic to their own restaurants, including Foreign Cinema and Michael Tusk's Quince. And just across the bay, in Oakland, two of the restless, brilliant adolescents of Chez Panisse are coming of age.





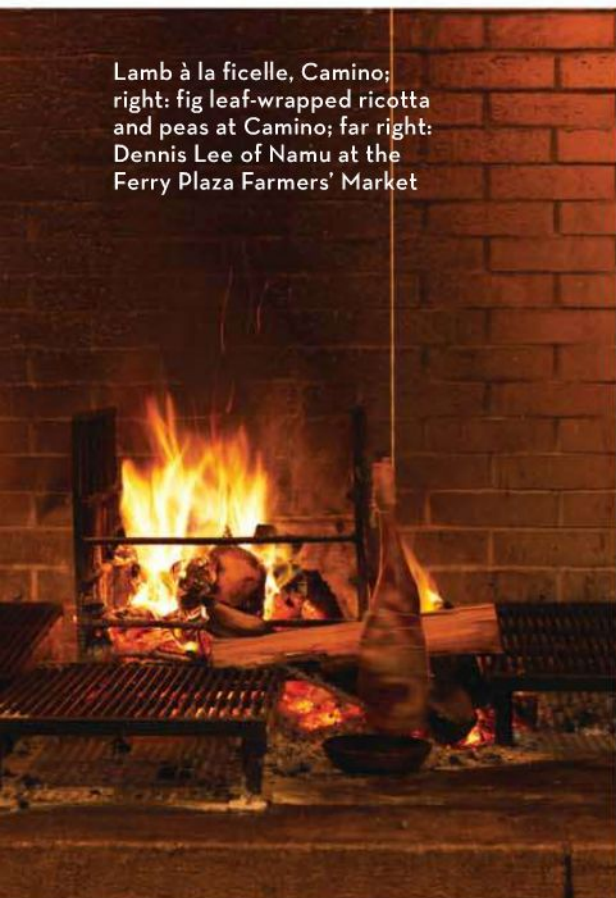


Clockwise from below: San Francisco terrace houses; Bar Jules; cactus for sale at Alemany Farmers' Market; sardines with citrus, avocado and almonds from Contigo; Alice Waters in her garden; above Foreign Cinema in the Mission District; Chez Panisse menu; Andrew Mariani of Scribe makes a wine delivery





Lamb à la ficelle, Camino; right: fig leaf-wrapped ricotta and peas at Camino; far right: Dennis Lee of Namu at the Ferry Plaza Farmers' Market



## The region's pared-back, produce-driven restaurant style has moved beyond the French-Italian sensibility it grew up with

The aptly named Camino (fireplace in Italian) is housed in a cavernous room with exposed brick walls, Basque-style communal dining tables, an open central fireplace and altar-like kitchen. Chef Russell Moore – a two-decade veteran of Chez Panisse – cooks only with an open flame and produces aggressively simple fare such as ricotta and peas wrapped in a grilled fig leaf.

The spartan menu changes daily but if luck is going in your direction it may feature baby goat or lamb à la ficelle, the Provençal method where the leg hangs on string and slowly spins above the open hearth.

The financial downturn somewhat quashed a burgeoning scene in Oakland's Temescal area. However, Pizzaiolo, a pared-back pizzeria with a speakeasy vibe and hip staff, bucked the trend. It has become a club house for the young locavore crew, whose patronage ensures that the wood oven churns out dozens of wild nettle and pecorino pizzas nightly.

Back in the city, the best place for exciting dining options is the Mission District, from the authentic carne asada tacos at La Taqueria to a smattering of sharp, modern

Italian diners. Named for San Francisco's oldest building, the Mission of St Francis of Assisi, this district has undergone a decade-long demographic change that has left it with colourful and expressive Latin murals emblazoned on almost every surface. It is one of the city's most alive, diverse and youthful areas.

San Franciscans rightly pride themselves on the quality of their pizza and in the Mission a triumvirate of pizzerias competes for attention. Frankly, there is not much light between the pies at Pizzeria Delfina, Flour + Water and Beretta, but each offers a different scene and particular strengths. At Pizzeria Delfina it's people-watching and beautifully restrained antipasti like fava beans and rosemary on charred bread with a wedge of pecorino. At Beretta, Christa Manolo brings her mixology to its cocktail list using honey, rosemary, basil and rye whiskey. Flour + Water aptly pays fastidious attention to its homemade pasta.

It is not a nightclub or bar that is the beating heart of the hip scene in San Francisco but a park. In a city of microclimates where whole suburbs are perpetually clouded in

foggy gloom, the sun shines most often in the Mission's Dolores Park. On a sunny Saturday the park is crowded with an eclectic mix of San Franciscans and bicycles, and the smell of San Francisco's favourite herb wafts through the air.

That may go some way towards explaining the extraordinary lines at the adjacent Tartine Bakery, Bi-Rite Grocery and its ice-cream offshoot, Bi-Rite Creamery. Tartine's morning bun is a legendary swirl of flaky pastry with the faintest whiff of orange blossom and a dusting of granular sugar.

Bi-Rite Grocery is the most politically correct grocery store around: almost everything is organic, ethically raised and locally grown. Its latest addition, Bi-Rite Creamery, is an all-American-style ice-cream bolt hole that experiments with new flavour combinations (bacon ice-cream anyone?). It can take credit for the welcome skirmish of salty caramel ice-cream on menus across America.

The pared-back, produce-driven restaurant style associated with the region has recently moved well beyond the French-Italian sensibility it grew up with.





Basque-style communal dining table at Camino



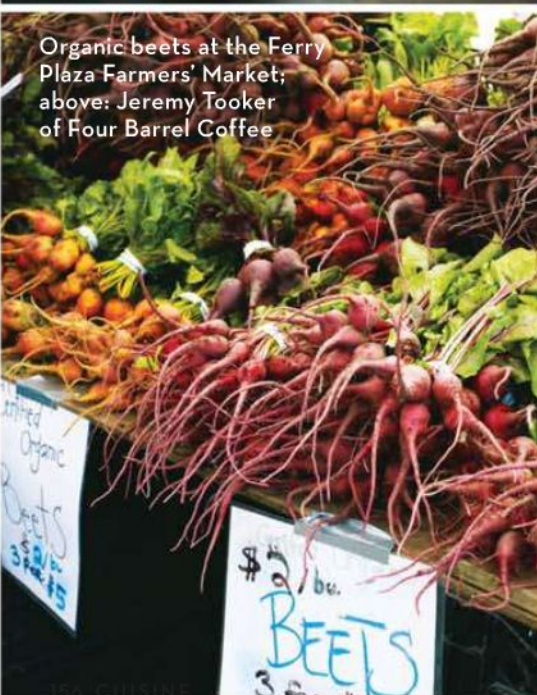
## Young farmers, artisans, foragers, chefs and winemakers here are forging a new food future that's radical in its simplicity



Map of northern Californian farms at the Alemany Farmers' Market



Organic beets at the Ferry Plaza Farmers' Market; above: Jeremy Tooker of Four Barrel Coffee



At Namu the Lee brothers draw on their Korean and Californian heritages to create dishes like Korean beef tacos, a distinctly Bay Area innovation that has nori replace tortilla, with a salsa of kimchi and daikon. While at Contigo tapas bar, diners sit surrounded by a working kitchen garden and sample its fresh, clean takes on Catalan classics. The bright neighbourhood restaurant Bar Jules in upwardly mobile Hayes Valley has a devoted following for its warm atmosphere and neat, limited menu that changes daily.

For a visitor, a trip to a Bay Area farmers' market can be a conflicting experience. Deep, seething envy at the bounty on offer is tempered by the sensory joy of rows and rows of stands spilling with 15 varieties of whichever fruit or vegetable is perfect at that moment. (In a hopeful sign the average age of growers who staff these stalls is becoming younger.)

The Ferry Plaza market in town may have the glamour and fame, but the sprawling and decidedly more working-class Alemany market on the city outskirts is the insider's farmers' market. However, both are extraordinary and perfect places to go to gain a complete picture of the depth of the food culture of the city.

A visit to the Ferry Plaza is not complete without stopping by Cowgirl Creamery Cheese Shop, the city outlet for the pioneering cheese company established by ex-Chez Panisse chef Peggy Smith (rumour has it she used to cook in cowboy boots while listening to Dolly Parton) and Sue Conley. Cowgirl Creamery makes award-winning, washed-rind cheeses, like Red Hawk and Mt Tam, and has also been instrumental in championing a nationwide renaissance of raw milk cheeses.

Also at Ferry Plaza, Boulettes Larder is a provision store/café best described as esoteric. Chef Amaryll Schwertner combines her gift for

cooking with an eye for detail and a traveller's curiosity. Apothecary jars and bowls with obscure Levant spices, fine Japanese sugars and pale blue eggs from Araucana chickens fill the carefully curated space.

San Francisco's zeal for food purity has rubbed off on the nearby wine counties of Napa, Sonoma and Mendocino, where smaller wineries are increasingly moving to "natural" (organic and dry farming, indigenous yeast fermentation and no use of chemicals) wine production. Andrew Mariani, a handsome 29-year-old party boy whose Sonoma-based Scribe Winery stars on prestigious local lists, is just one of those responding to the natural challenge.

Taste these wines at Terroir, a wine bar/merchant/DJ booth selling the best of Old and New Worlds in its unlikely location in seedy SoMa (South of Market). Sitting unobtrusively among the warehouses, gas stations and parking lots of this nightclub district, the first hint of its presence is the people milling around outside.

In a beautifully compatible arrangement, the Spencer on the Go! converted taco truck pulls up in the carpark outside Terroir at dusk and serves from its lavender-lined window posh French takeaways from Chez Spencer, including escargot lollipops and foie gras brioche. It is part of a trend towards high-end food carts sparked by the downtown.

Recent years have also seen the rise of micro-roasters. Blue Bottle offers the buzz, gadgetry and hype, but the real cachet lies at Four Barrel. The seriousness with which these young people take their craft gives a clue to the soul of the Bay Area food scene: here the young farmers, artisans, foragers, chefs and winemakers are not dilettantes, but busy forging a new food future that is homegrown, back to basics and radical in its simplicity. *Viva la revolución!*



## FACT FILE

### **Alemaný Farmers' Market**

Sat 8am-3pm  
100 Alemaný Blvd,  
Bernal Heights

### **Bar Jules**

609 Hayes St, Hayes Valley,  
ph: 415-621 5482, barjules.com

### **Beretta**

1199 Valencia St, Mission, ph:  
415-695 1199, berettasf.com

### **Bi-Rite Creamery**

3692 18th St (cnr Dolores St),  
Mission, ph: 415-626 5600,  
biritcreamery.com

### **Bi-Rite Market**

3639 18th St (between  
Guerrero & Oakwood Sts),  
Mission, ph: 415-241 9760,  
biritemarket.com

### **Blue Bottle Coffee Co**

Four Bay Area cafés  
66 Mint St; Ferry Building  
Shop 7; 151 3rd St, L5;  
300 Webster St, Oakland;  
kiosk at 315 Linden St, Hayes  
Valley, bluebottlecoffee.net

### **Boulettes Larder**

1 Ferry Bldg, ph: 415-399 1155,  
bouletteslarder.com

### **Camino**

3917 Grand Ave, Oakland,  
ph: 510-547 5035,  
caminorestaurant.com

### **Chez Panisse Restaurant and Café**

1517 Shattuck Ave, Berkeley,  
ph: 510-548 5525  
(restaurant, reservations  
only) or 510-548 5049 (café),  
chezpanisse.com

### **Contigo**

1320 Castro St (at 24th St),  
Noa Valley, ph: 415-285 0250,  
contigosf.com

### **Cowgirl Creamery Cheese Shop**

1 Ferry Building, Shop 17,  
ph: 415-362 9354,  
cowgirlcreamery.com

### **Ferry Plaza Farmers' Market**

Tues & Thurs 10am-2pm,  
Sat 8am-2pm

1 Ferry Building, Suite 50,  
ph: 415-291 3276,  
cuesa.org

### **Flour + Water**

2401 Harrison St, Mission,  
ph: 415-826 7000,  
flourandwater.com

### **Foreign Cinema**

2534 Mission St, Mission,  
ph: 415-648 7600,  
foreigncinema.com

### **Four Barrel Coffee**

375 Valencia St (at 15th St),  
Mission, ph: 415-252 0800,  
fourbarrelcoffee.com

### **La Taqueria**

2889 Mission St, Mission,  
ph: 415-285 7117

### **Namu**

439 Balboa St (cnr 6th Ave),  
ph: 415-386 8332,  
namusf.com

### **Pizzaio**

5008 Telegraph Ave,  
Oakland, ph: 510-652 4888,  
pizzaioloakland.com

### **Pizzeria Delfina**

3611 18th St, Mission,  
ph: 415-437 6800,  
pizzeriadelfina.com

### **Quince**

470 Pacific Ave, Jackson  
Square, ph: 415-775 8500,  
quincerestaurant.com

### **Scribe Winery**

Tastings by appointment only,  
scribewinery.com

### **Spencer on the Go!**

Wed-Sat from 6pm  
Cnr 7th & Folsom, SoMa,  
chezspencer.net

### **Tartine Bakery**

600 Guerrero St, Mission,  
ph: 415-487 2600,  
tartinebakery.com

### **Terroir**

1116 Folsom St (between 7th  
& 8th Sts), ph: 415-558 9946,  
terroirsf.com

### **Zuni Café**

1658 Market St, ph: 415-552  
2522, zunicafe.com ☼

Dolores Park, Mission District





An aerial photograph of a vineyard during autumn. A wide dirt road runs diagonally from the bottom left towards the top center. On the left side of the road, there are rows of grapevines with golden-yellow leaves. On the right side, there are rows of grapevines with green leaves, and further right, there are long, narrow white plastic covers. In the lower-left portion of the image, three people are riding ATVs on the dirt road. The person in the foreground is on a red ATV, wearing a blue t-shirt and light-colored shorts. Behind them, two other people are on a black ATV. The scene is brightly lit, casting long shadows across the road and vineyard.

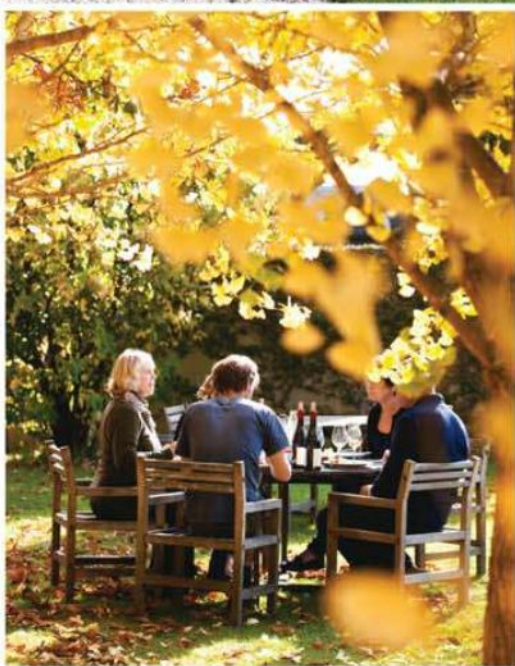
Gisborne's renewal  
impresses **David Burton**,  
but will the word  
get out? •

# gisborne again





Clockwise from below: Morrell's Artisan Bakery; Matawhero Wines; The Millton Vineyard; Café 1874, Poverty Bay Club; Nick Nobilo, Vinoptima Estate; fish of the day at The Wharf Café, Bar & Restaurant; opposite: Vinoptima Estate







here's no denying Gisborne is off the beaten track, on the road to nowhere. For now, tourism struggles here, yet sooner or later Gisborne's charms are going to be discovered by the outside world.

With a dozen picturesque boutique wineries, an art and fashion scene, and a collection of elegant heritage buildings now converted into swish riverside restaurants and funky cafés, modern Gisborne is unusually sophisticated for its size.

Yet in the eyes of the rest of New Zealand, all this is still overshadowed by the region's traditional reputation for bulk Chardonnay and surfing. Not for nothing do all the leading names of New Zealand professional surfing live along the coastal stretch in front of Wainui Beach, five minutes' drive from the central city, where the surf is the most consistent in New Zealand.

Today, Wainui's modest fifties beachfront houses are being sold for one or two million to Aucklanders and wealthy foreigners in search of a holiday hideaway.

In recent years the region has also has been discovered by young parents aged 25-40 from Auckland, Wellington or returning from overseas, who have settled there to raise families.

At Flavour, a food advertising and communications company overlooking Gisborne's marina, virtually all the staff are either young parents or surfers, or both, while Zimbabwe-born Steve Abramowitz, who today drives the stove at Café Ruba ("why would I employ a chef when the margins are already so small?"), was formerly creative director of advertising agencies in London, Melbourne, Dubai, and latterly at TBWA in Auckland.

Today he is home by 3pm, after which he might go trout fishing or salt some duck breast prosciutto to hang below his stairs, as well as feed the pigs which one day will go into his fabulous pork and armagnac terrine.

At Paul Nache Gallery, upstairs on Grey St, art dealer Gene Paul came to Gisborne in order to stock big-name painters like Robert Janhke and John Walsh, since they are already well represented in the main centres.

The other reason Gene moved to Gisborne was his other half - Chelsea Thorpe, a fashion designer who has returned home to Gisborne to work, via factories in China, out of her shopfront L'Amour Moderne.

Next door, her sister Zoe runs the busy Winemakers Daughters Café, while their winemaker father, John Thorpe, of Longbush Wines, is also a chef, having established two of Gisborne's leading cafés, The Works and the Wharf Café.

As for Chardonnay, there's still more planted in Gisborne than all the other grape varieties combined, but with contract growers facing cuts, there may be more movement towards aromatic whites - Gewürztraminer, Pinot Gris and Viognier - which a dozen or so boutique wineries have already proven a success.

Gisborne's soils are young, very fertile and hold the moisture well. As Denis Irwin proved at Matawhero in the 1980s and Nick Nobilo confirms at Vinoptima, world-class Gewürztraminer emerges from these conditions, as well as a bold Viognier and a lighter Italian Pinot Grigio style.

Gisborne soils are too strong for Pinot Noir, but at his Spade Oak vineyard, Steve Voysey is achieving early success with St Laurent, an Austrian relative of Pinot, bred for colder conditions. He also gave me a foretaste of Gisborne's first experimental Albariño, made from grapes raised at Riversun Nursery.

This Albariño is to Spain what Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc is to the Loire Valley: the first commercial crop of Gisborne Albariño is due next year, planted by contract grower Doug Bell. Watch this space!

## FOOD

### Gisborne Farmers' Market

Sat 9.30am-12.30pm

[gisbornefarmersmarket.co.nz](http://gisbornefarmersmarket.co.nz)

The piles of mandarins, navel oranges, apples, kiwifruit, tamarillos, avocados, persimmons and Torere macadamias pay testament to the region's rich soils.

### ARTISAN PRODUCERS, BREWERS & FOOD STORES

#### Heavitree Juice

[heavitree@clear.net.nz](mailto:heavitree@clear.net.nz)

Orchardist Stephen Newman sells his apple, orange and pure grape juices, as well as an apple-feijoa mix, at the farmers' market. These juices have the taste and look of the artisan product, the bottle having a sediment that needs to be shaken.

#### Hika Coffee Co

[heavitree@clear.net.nz](mailto:heavitree@clear.net.nz)

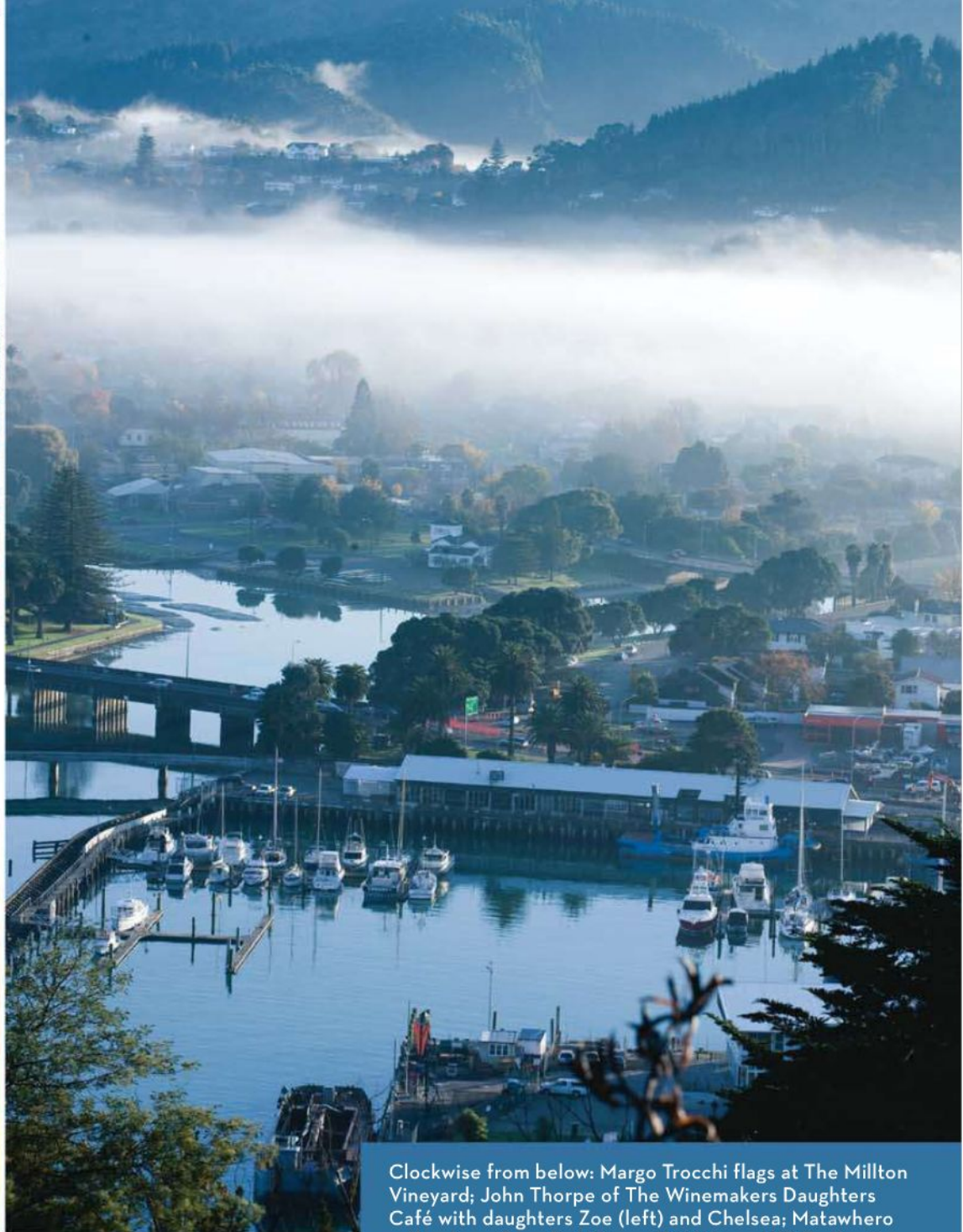
Hika is Gisborne's sole coffee roaster, established two years ago by Stephen Newman as a companion business to Heavitree Juice. The American air-funnel roaster is based in a farm shed on his orchard and the beans are available at the farmers' market.

#### Morrell's Artisan Bakery

437 Gladstone Rd, ph: 06-867 8266

Spotting a niche in Gisborne for an artisan bakery, Mark Morrell shifted down from Auckland to fill it. He makes sourdough, ciabatta, brioche and organic loaves at his downtown shop, where he also offers rewana bread, having been taught the recipe at the kitchen table of a local identity named Blackie.





Clockwise from below: Margo Trocchi flags at The Millton Vineyard; John Thorpe of The Winemakers Daughters Café with daughters Zoe (left) and Chelsea; Matawhero cellar door; Geordie Witters, TW Wines; USSCo Bar & Bistro chef-patron Tom Boyce (left) and sous-chef Jamie Easton; Gisborne from Kaiti Hill; opposite: Captain Cook monument looks out to Young Nick's Head





### Sunshine Brewery

109 Disraeli St, ph: 06-867 7777,  
gisbornegold.co.nz

Established 20 years ago, Sunshine was one of the first boutique breweries in New Zealand and is a local identity.

### Vetro Mediterranean Food

48 Reads Quay, ph: 06-863 3449

Steve Abramowitz from Café Ruba can often be seen sniffing about for Italian cheeses and salami at Vetro, which he describes as the Gisborne food scene's missing link.

## RESTAURANTS & CAFÉS

### Café Ruba

14 Childers Rd, ph: 06-868 6516

Through the wall from USSCo is Café Ruba, a space that offers Old World character, albeit on a truncated scale. Come for the Kiwi café breakfast: eggs Benedict and Florentine, and lovely homemade muesli served with fresh Gisborne fruit.

### Café Villaggio

57 Ballance St, ph: 06-863 3895

Despite a location on the fringes of a suburban shopping centre, this curvaceous, dead-cute little art deco bungalow, popular for both coffee and pizza, has managed to maintain its tree-filled property, which now serves as a setting for outdoor seating.

### Marina Restaurant

Marina Park, Vogel St, ph:

06-868 5919, marinarestaurant.co.nz

Should you crave a little duck fat and a naughty morsel of cholesterol-ridden fromage, go to the Marina. Chef Stéphane Dussau's rendition of duck confit is no cliché: salty, and tasting properly aged and cured, it comes with the skin fully crisped up just before service. Formidable! The building, a former ballroom, was shifted to its present location in 1974.

### Off the Hook at Real

49 The Esplanade, ph: 06-867 9420,  
npsg.co.nz/realfresh

At the fish and chip shop attached to Real - Fresh from the Sea, you are challenged to finish the huge Sprat Pack or Fish of the Day burger, which,

the legend goes, they have to keep selling at \$6 because their signwriter, also a regular customer, refused to change the figure.

### Poverty Bay Club

38 Childers Rd, ph: 06-863 2006,  
thepovertybayclub.co.nz

Built in 1898 for the Poverty Bay Club, this building now hosts a café, a bar, an arthouse cinema, shops and offices. You can almost see the ghosts of crusty old gents rattling their newspapers as you lounge on a leather sofa beneath the honours board in the former library, drinking Café 1874's excellent cappuccino, and almost hear the clack of billiards balls beneath the grand leadlight domes of the Dome Cinema. Visit Winston's Bar, formerly The Churchill Room, and drink a cocktail in New Zealand's oldest squash court.

### Soho Bar

2 Crawford Rd, Wharfside,

ph: 06-868 3888, sohobar.co.nz

For a dinkum taste of Gisborne, join the ever-changing crowd at Soho Bar, which kicks off the evening serving delicately wrought tapas and fine cuisine to a sophisticated clientele, drinking Brunton Road and other fine Gisborne wines. A little later the pub crowd trickles in, then, as the middle classes call for their bills, DJs tote their gear in, followed by a tattooed troop of muscled mariners from the waterfront, just a stone's throw away.

### The Wainui Store

4 Oneroa Rd, Wainui Beach,

ph: 06-867 8446, wainuistore.co.nz

The Wainui Store has been a corner dairy since 1935. New owners have kept the dairy side but now also offer burgers and surfboard hire as well. The latest move has been into yummy thin-base pizza.

### The Wharf Café, Bar & Restaurant

The Esplanade, ph: 06-868 4876,  
wharfbar.co.nz

This sleek, modern café overlooks Gisborne's marina and the trawlers' dock beyond - thus whetting your appetite for a ladling of hollandaise

over beautifully fresh fish, supplied daily by the Ngati Porou-owned Real - Fresh from the Sea.

### The Winemakers Daughters Café

88 Grey St, ph: 06-868 8383

Popular upstairs daytime café operated by a scion of the famous Thorpe family, John Thorpe, with daughter Zoe (see page 160).

### The Works Café

The Esplanade, ph: 0800-333 114,  
workscfe.co.nz

Once part of Gisborne's freezing works, this is a grand two-storeyed affair, crowned with circular windows. The casual café is on the ground floor.

### USSCo Bar & Bistro

16 Childers Rd, ph: 06-868 3246,  
ussco.co.nz

USSCo rivals Soho Bar to provide the best modern eclectic cuisine in Gisborne. Chef-patron Tom Boyce comes from the former acclaimed Bach at Taupo. The building once headquartered the Union Steam Ship Company and the intricately detailed classical ceiling is a treasure.

### Verve Café & Bar

121 Gladstone Rd, ph: 06-868 9095

Some of Gisborne's best espresso is served here, in classic boho café surroundings. Outside tables all catch lovely morning sun.

## TO STAY

### Emerald Hotel

13 Gladstone Rd, ph: 06-868 8055,  
emeraldhotel.co.nz

Central, with modern, spacious rooms, the best of which have private balconies overlooking the confluence of three rivers.

### Knapdale Eco Lodge

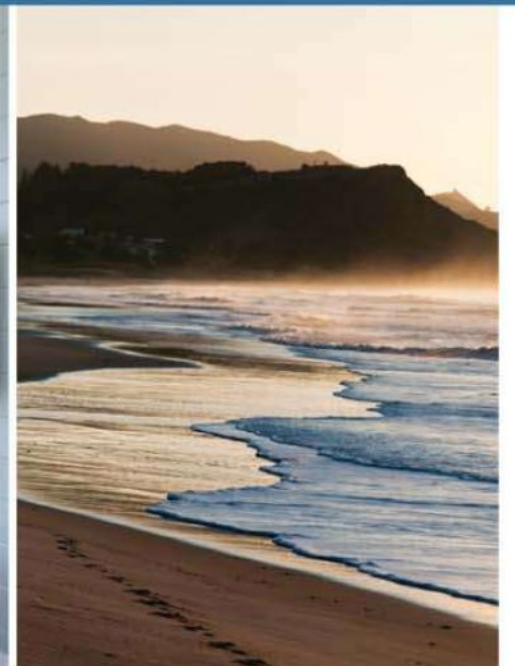
114 Snowsill Rd, RD1, Waihirere,  
ph: 06-862 5444, knapdale.co.nz

Owners Kay and Kees Weytmans share their farm, offering gourmet dining using mainly farm-produced organic ingredients, including honey and venison.





Clockwise from below: Wainui Beach; Singalati Beach House; Steve Abramowitz, Café Ruba; Marina Restaurant; The Wainui Store and co-owner Marcel Campbell





### Portside Hotel

2 Reads Quay, ph: 06-869 1000, [portsidegisborne.co.nz](http://portsidegisborne.co.nz)

This modern, luxuriously appointed, 64-room hotel is hung with bold artworks from the Paul Nache Gallery and offers a lap pool and gym. Sunny balconies overlook the river and port.

### Singalati Beach House

Wainui Beach, [singalati.co.nz](http://singalati.co.nz)

A classic beachfront house with nothing but a lawn between you and the ocean. There are three bedrooms, a bunkroom and touches of luxury in a hot outdoor shower, air conditioning, Sky TV and wireless internet.

## WINE

Among Gisborne's cellar doors are:

### Bushmere Estate

166 Main Rd, Matawhero, ph: 06-868 9317

When David Egan is not selling real estate, he is spinning yarns for the coachloads who visit his winery, while his wife, Shona, sets out appetisers to match the wines they offer for tasting.

### Hihi Wines

53 Bond Rd, RD1, ph: 06-862 5077, [hihi.co.nz](http://hihi.co.nz)

Everything that neighbouring Vinoptima is, Hihi is not. At the end of a gravel drive beside a pair of low farm sheds, winemaker-owner Andy Nimmo rolls out a barrel-top for a laidback tasting of his wines.

### Kirkpatrick Estate Winery

569 Wharekopae Rd, RD2, ph: 06-862 7722, [kew.co.nz](http://kew.co.nz)

Try winemaker Anita Ewart-Croy's handcrafted wines at this boutique vineyard with panoramic views out to Young Nick's Head from the Reserve Merlot plantings and over the hills of the Patutahi Plateau.

### Matawhero Wines

189 Riverpoint Rd, RD1, ph: 06-867 6140, [matawhero.co.nz](http://matawhero.co.nz)

Richard and Kirsten Searle bought this famous winery and surrounding estate from the Irwin family, and have set about replanting varieties such as Gewürztraminer, for which wine pioneer Denis Irwin put Gisborne on the map. In the newly restored tasting room, wines from the Searles' original vineyard, Brunton Road, are on offer, with gourmet platters and live music on Sundays planned for summer.

### Spade Oak

437A Main Rd, RD1, ph: 06-867 0198, [spadeoak.co.nz](http://spadeoak.co.nz)

At their cellar door in the shade of a grove of cork trees, Steve and Eileen Voysey plan to match homegrown olives and horseradish with their wild-ferment Chardonnay and a Condrieu-style Viognier, made by Ross Mirko. Due to open in October.

### Stone Bridge Wines

70 Newstead Lane, RD1, ph: 06-867 7140

Former contract grape growers David and Mairéad Hart have set up a cellar door/tasting bar in the former garage of their house, overlooking the vines.

### The Millton Vineyard

119 Papatu Rd, Manutuke, ph: 06-862 8680, [millton.co.nz](http://millton.co.nz)

James and Annie Millton are the only Gisborne winemakers whose wines are consistently represented on restaurant wine lists around New Zealand and overseas. Since 1984, they have consistently pursued quality over quantity, encouraging other Gisborne wine growers to follow suit. From the high-ceilinged cellar door to the formal maze of lavender hedges that fronts the Milltons' house, the

tree-covered, biodynamic estate is one of the most idyllic in Gisborne. Tastings can be accompanied by Café Ruba picnic boxes.

### The Works Winery & Café

Cnr The Esplanade & Crawford Rd, ph: 0800-333 114

This building is the last remnant of the Kaiti Freezing Works, demolished in 1966 and now home to a winery, a cellar door and a café, looking out to the inner harbour. The Works brand was relaunched this year with a new label and a full range of wines.

### TW Wines

Back Ormond Rd, RD1, ph: 021-864 818, [twwines.co.nz](http://twwines.co.nz)

Be prepared to be whizzed around the vineyards on a farm bike by owners Paul Tietjen and Geordie Witters, and to be invited to participate briefly in vineyard activities from picking grapes to piling up prunings.

### Vinoptima Estate

138 Ngakoroa Rd, Ormond, ph: 06-862 5520, [vinoptima.co.nz](http://vinoptima.co.nz)

After the sale of his eponymous family winery, Nick Nobilo set himself a new mission, to produce world-class Gewürztraminer in Gisborne. Vinoptima is the expression of this pursuit for excellence. The floors, as Robert Parker's spy so memorably put it, are clean enough to eat your dinner off, and the Gewürztraminer which emerges as the winery's sole product, tastes equally pure yet also as luscious as any Gewürz from Alsace. ☼

### Gisborne Food & Wine Festival 2010 at Labour Weekend

24 October

Gray's Bush Scenic Reserve  
[gisbornewine.co.nz/festival](http://gisbornewine.co.nz/festival)

View from State Highway 2 to the west across Gisborne's Waingake Valley





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# The village, the priest, the baker & his windmill

Among the vines and limestone hills of the Corbières, **John Saker** discovers the village of Cucugnan and the devotion of its artisan baker

**T**he priest (*curé*) of Cucugnan is everywhere. Climbing the twisted, one-way alleys of this village in the Corbières in France's south-west, you discover La Table du Curé (a restaurant), a public rose garden called Le Jardin du Curé and a forgettable 20-minute slideshow retelling the priest's tale at a theatrette in the town square.

The priest's story is the one Cucugnan has been telling about itself for some time now, even though the good pastor is quite fictional. Provençal writer Alphonse Daudet's short story *Le Curé de Cucugnan*, penned in the 19th century, has been an enduring hit – almost

every Frenchman and woman knows of Cucugnan, despite its having fewer than 150 inhabitants.

But if you keep climbing to the top of the jumbled mound of stone buildings that is Cucugnan, you will find that the *curé* now has a rival. There's a new story in town.

Standing out against the blue Languedoc sky is a beautifully restored stone windmill. Its four wooden blades face north-west, from whence the famous local wind, the *tramontane*, blows in – often with ferocity. It is a working windmill and the man who uses it to grind wheat into flour, which he then takes to bake bread, croissants, biscuits and

other delights, is artisan *boulangier* Roland Feuillas.

Roland approaches his work in an intellectual, almost spiritual manner. When he was younger he spent two years in a Benedictine monastery in Paris. “Two things that are important to me,” he says, “are humility and simplicity. That is why I do things the way they used to be done.”

He was raised in a family where meal times were a daily communion of pleasure. He talks of the “holy trinity of the table – bread, wine and cheese – all three are alive, and no lives are sacrificed in their making”.

After only a brief exchange, he has completely won my trust.





Roland Feuillas' windmill;  
below right: Roland (left)  
and helper; right: their  
artisan breads; opposite:  
Quéribus Castle



"Where should I take my family to eat in Cucugnan?" I ask.

"You can dine here," he says, pointing to the small stone building close to the windmill. "That is my office, a café, a place where I give cooking classes. We receive people for meals if they give us a few days' notice and are interested in food that is pure and natural. Three courses with wine, 20 euros each."

I need no convincing. He even asks if there is anything in particular we would like to have. "*Civet de lapin*," I reply, recalling a famous southern French recipe, where rabbit is stewed, traditionally in some of its own blood. Roland seems happy.

So it is arranged; on our last night in Cucugnan we will eat in the shadow of the windmill.

Cucugnan sits in a valley clothed in vines. However, as with the rest of the Languedoc, Cucugnan's vineyards face an uncertain future. They were originally planted to make oceans of cheap wine for the masses. The masses, unfortunately, are now drinking less and demanding better. The *coopérative vinicoles* that used to buy their farmers' fruit (regardless of quality) and turn it into indifferent wine are either closing, merging or trying desperately to raise their game.

Alongside them, private domaines have sprung up and it was at the

cellar door of one of these that I discovered a truly memorable wine. Domaine du Grand Arc was established in 1990 by Bruno and Fabienne Schenck, an Alsatian couple, after Bruno decided to escape a career in the auto industry. They make excellent wines, but the stable thoroughbred is Aux Temps d'Histoire, an intense, profound red made from the fruit of antique Carignan vines.

Carignan was long regarded as a workhorse grape of dubious quality. However, in recent years the charms of wines such as this, made with care from the fruit of century-old vines in favoured sites, have forced that view



to be revised. "It is a hilltop vineyard that belonged to a man who had no family and was going to retire," explains Fabienne. "We bought it in 2000 and if we hadn't, the vines would have been pulled up and lost. For us, old Carignan is the vinous treasure of the Languedoc."

Other local treasures, more ancient still, are the castles crowning the sun-blanching ridges. There seems to be one fastened to every second hill and two that are truly irresistible look down on Cucugnan.

To the north-west, spread out along a limestone escarpment like a cat sunning itself, is Peyrepertuse. Directly opposite is its chunkier neighbour Quéribus. From Cucugnan it's a two-and-a-half-hour return hike up to Quéribus. The path crosses vineyards before rising steeply

extraordinary, rich, spicy flavours. Roland explained they were made from the Pyrénées pig Le Noir de Bigorre. "They are an ancient pig... the ancestors of all other pigs," he told us. "They were recently saved from extinction. Now they farm them in open fields where they eat the grass, fallen chestnuts and whatever else is there."

It was a tough act to follow. But as Roland placed the heavy casserole holding the rabbit on the table, the aromatics were more than promising. He made an announcement. "I have been so busy, I asked my mother Maryse to make this. She lives near Nîmes, made it yesterday and drove here today with it in the car. It is a recipe that has been in our family for five generations. It currently belongs to her.

## Roland Feuillas talks of the "holy trinity of the table - bread, wine and cheese - all three are alive, and no lives are sacrificed in their making"

through gorgeously scented *garrigue* (herb-rich scrub) to the castle. An ascent of Peyrepertuse takes a few hours longer.

Finding a defensible location was, of course, a crucial part of building a medieval fortification. But the sites of these two eyries are outrageous. Even today, without defenders raining arrows on you, any assault can be perilous.

When the *tramontane* gets up, the castles are closed.

During our explorations, we had been tasting Roland Feuillas' wares daily: buttery croissants in the mornings and later the dense, flavoursome loaves baked in his wood-fired oven. He takes pride in the natural, organic provenance of all his ingredients.

Now, tired but gracious as ever, he and wife Valérie welcomed us on that final evening with a home-made *pastis*, the bottle's sediment composed of dozens of different herbs. Then followed a *charcuterie* entrée the like of which I have never experienced.

We had three pâtés that shared

"I am actually not allowed to use the recipe while she is alive."

We feasted, we savoured, we talked, we toasted Maryse. Her *civet de lapin* was everything I'd hoped for, and more. It was hearty, rich, simple and restrained all at the same time. Like all great meals, this was a moment. You knew everything about it was unrepeatable.

As we talked we discovered how Cucugnan's two stories are, in fact, deliciously entwined. Roland's hometown is Fontvieille in Provence. As a young boy, he loved the old windmill that is still one of the town's main attractions. Because it isn't any old windmill. It is Le Moulin de Daudet, which inspired the author to write *Le Curé de Cucugnan*.

Years later, when he wanted to set up as an artisan baker, a friend happened to be restoring the 17th-century windmill of St Omer in Cucugnan and he suggested Roland take a look. It was all meant to be. In 2006 Roland left Provence to become master of the windmill in Daudet's Cucugnan. The author couldn't have written a better sequel. ☼

## FACT FILE

### TO GET THERE

Fly in to Perpignan-Rivesaltes Airport and you're only a half hour drive from Cucugnan. Take the D117 west to Maury, after which Cucugnan is well sign-posted.

### STAY

There are several *gîtes* (motel-type accommodation), two good hotels and an array of rental villas around the village, plus a fully equipped house for rent in the heart of town that is ideal for group of up to seven, owned by the charming Gérard Gay. [homeaway.com/vacation-rental/p658555a](http://homeaway.com/vacation-rental/p658555a)

### EAT

You'll find Roland Feuillas most days at his Les Maîtres de Mon Moulin bakery, up near the windmill. There are three other restaurants in town, with the Auberge de Cucugnan serving the most authentic fare. For a tasty, quick snack such as a warm goat's cheese salad, visit Le Bar du Vigneron.

Auberge de Cucugnan, ph: 04-6845 4084, [auberge-de-cucugnan.com](http://auberge-de-cucugnan.com); Le Bar du Vigneron 5 Place du Platane

### DRINK

To find Domaine du Grand Arc, take the road to Padern. The tasting room is on the left as you enter the village.

Just north of Cucugnan, Domaine du Trillol also makes smart wines, including an unusual white blend of Roussanne and Macabeu, and a grippy red blend called Domaine du Trillol Prestige.

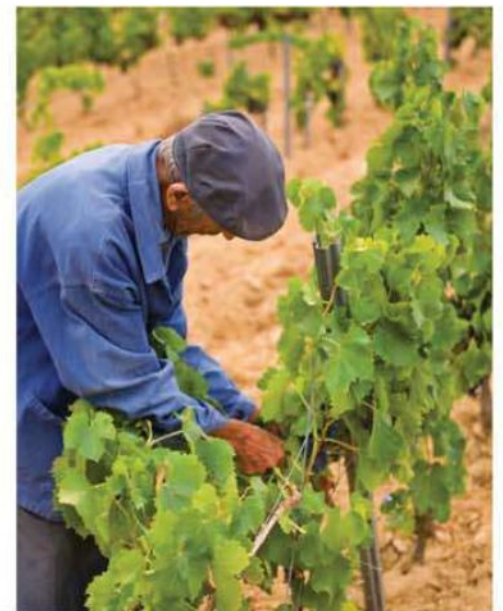
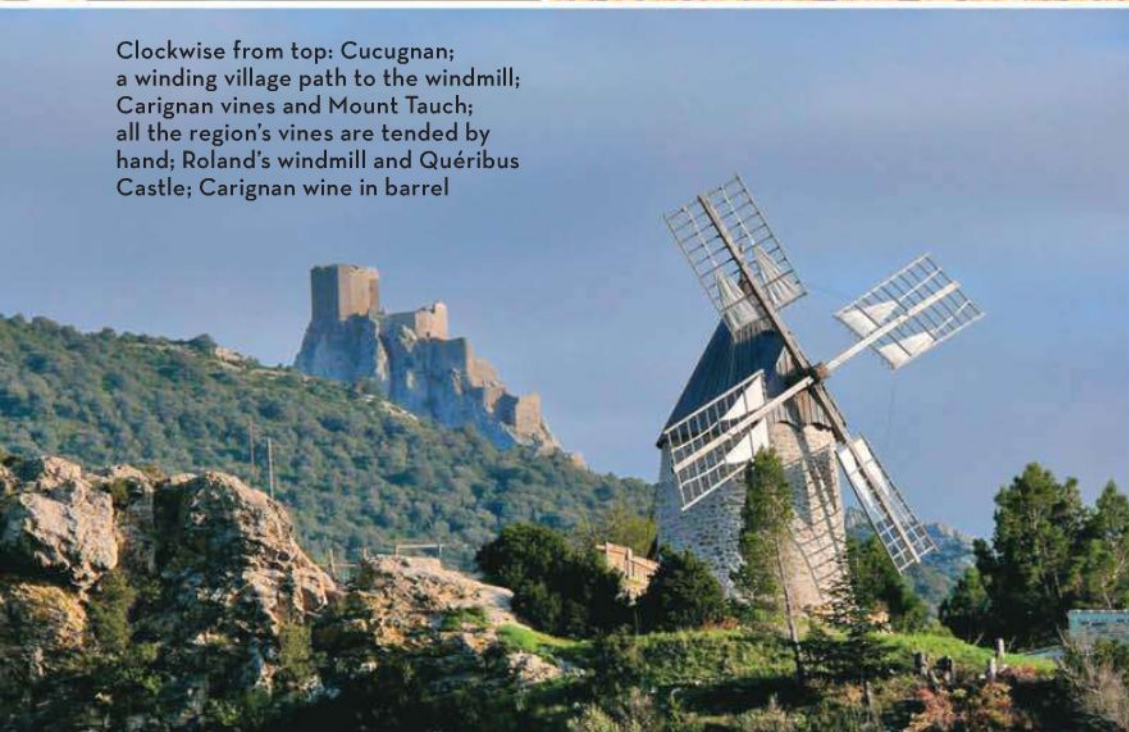
Domaine du Grand Arc, ph: 04-6845 0103, [domaine-grand-arc.com](http://domaine-grand-arc.com)  
Domaine du Trillol, Mas Le Trillol, 11350 Rouffiac des Corbières, ph: 04-6845 0113

✶ Cathay Pacific flies daily to Paris, via Hong Kong. For information on special fares visit [cathaypacific.co.nz](http://cathaypacific.co.nz)





Clockwise from top: Cucugnan;  
a winding village path to the windmill;  
Carignan vines and Mount Tauch;  
all the region's vines are tended by  
hand; Roland's windmill and Qu  ribus  
Castle; Carignan wine in barrel





*at your request*



Chilli Salt Squid



**HARRY'S BAR** in Nelson has fantastic food. My partner and I go there regularly and always enjoy the salted squid. Would it be possible to get the recipe? It is absolutely divine!  
**Wendy Mannering**  
Via email

▶ Rob Fanselow from Harry's Bar & Dining (306 Hardy St, Nelson, ph: 03-539 0905) gladly passed on the recipe.

## CHILLI SALT SQUID

SERVES 4

### Chilli Salt

1 cinnamon stick  
50g sea salt flakes  
2 teaspoons Szechuan pepper  
2 teaspoons coriander seeds  
2 star anise  
4 teaspoons chilli flakes  
4 cardamom pods

Toast all the ingredients in a pan then grind with a mortar and pestle. This amount of salt makes more than you require, but keeps well.

### Lemon Lime Dressing

50g palm sugar  
50ml lemon juice  
50ml lime juice  
50ml canola oil

Pound the palm sugar with a mortar and pestle. Strain the lemon and lime juices through a sieve. Start adding a little of the juice to the sugar, mixing until smooth. Add the remaining juice then add the oil and mix well.

### Pickled Carrots

100ml rice vinegar  
100g sugar  
100g carrots, cut into matchsticks

Heat the vinegar and sugar until the sugar has dissolved then pour over the carrots. Allow to cool before using.

### For the salad

4 squid tubes, cleaned and finely sliced into strips or rings  
rice flour for dusting  
canola oil for deep-frying

½ cucumber, seeded and cut into matchsticks  
200g mung bean sprouts  
1 packet snow pea shoots  
½ cup chopped coriander and mint  
crisp fried shallots (available from Asian stores) for garnish

Dust the squid in rice flour and deep-fry at 180°C until golden. Drain and sprinkle with chilli salt.

In a bowl, mix the carrot with the remaining salad ingredients and the dressing. Serve in bowls topped with squid and sprinkle with the shallots.

## PUKEKO JUNCTION CAFÉ

in North Canterbury makes a great lemon slice. I'd love the recipe.  
**Carol Newnham-Shaw**  
Via email

▶ Guy and Celine Graham of Pukeko Junction Café (458 Ashworths Rd, SH1, Leithfield, North Canterbury, ph: 03-314 8834) were happy to help.

## LEMON SLICE

### For the base

225g butter, softened  
90g icing sugar  
280g flour

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Line a 22cm x 30cm tin with baking paper. Beat the butter and sugar together until pale and fluffy then add the flour until the mixture just comes together. The mix will be slightly crumbly. Press lightly into the tin and bake for 15-20 minutes until golden.

### For the topping

4 eggs  
390g caster sugar  
1 rounded teaspoon baking powder  
150ml lemon juice

Beat together all the ingredients until smooth. Pour the filling on to the hot base and bake for 25 minutes or until set and golden on top. Cool before cutting into slices. ☺

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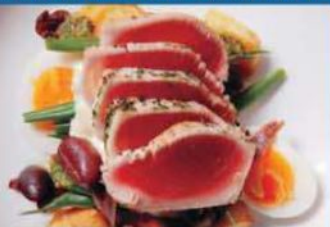
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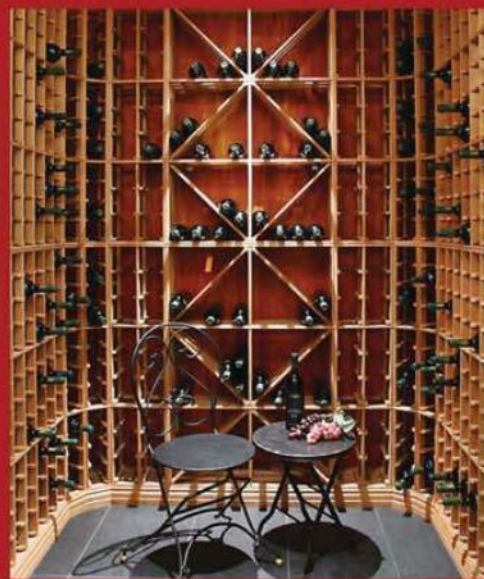
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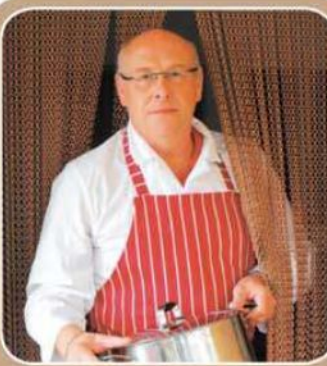
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 thestudio.co.nz  
**Vessel** vessel.co.nz

**QUICK SMART** page 50  
 Handmade ceramic plate (Bob Steiner Ceramics); Rockpool bowl (Nest).

**LOVE ME TENDER** page 62  
 Glass splashback (Deco Glaze); Rockpool platter (Nest); ceramic platter and glass decanter (Cranfields); wooden chopping board and tumblers (Country Road); small carved bowl (Aimée Mcleod); Brown Design printed panel (The Poi Room); Wüsthof Ikon meat fork, Wüsthof Classic Ikon Crème carving set and small pepper grinder (The House of Knives); small decorative bowl (Chin Chin Traders); small black ceramic bowl (Corso De' Fiori); black La Chamba serving dish (French Country Collections).

**NO BONES ABOUT IT** page 70  
 Nontron cutlery, Katherine Smyth ceramic plates and bowls, Paul Melser ceramic plates and Jill Bagnall beakers (Vessel).

**RISE TO THE OCCASION** page 90  
 Antique gold cake forks, crystal bowl and plate, coloured glass bowl, Crown Lynn Bambi and Crown Lynn parrot ornaments, silver cake stands, Japanese vase, 1950s blue vase, Poole cup and saucers, and paua teaspoon (Antiques of Epsom); antique decorative plates, silver coffee set and star cup and saucers (Haunt); Cordon Bleu white cake stand and Spiegelau small glass jug (The Studio of Tableware); grey glass vase and Paris wrapping paper (Macy Home);

Victoriana Toile, Red, Santorini Grey, Grand Palais, Patchwork toile, Quail Covey fabrics (Martha's Fabrics).

**BUTTER BUTTER'S BETTER** page 100  
 Antique fish server and enamel ladle (Antiques of Epsom); tea towel and small Rockpool bowl (Nest); handmade ceramic salt and pepper dishes, small ceramic bowls and large ceramic pasta bowl (Bob Steiner Ceramics); saucer (Haunt).

**GREAT ESCAPE** page 108  
 Casa Armani Boheme plates, Casa Armani Arpa cutlery and Casa Armani Corelli highball tumblers (Matisse); Society Italian linen tablecloth and napkins (Siena); Spiegelau glasses and glass jug (The Studio of Tableware); Tolix chairs (Madder & Rouge); flowers (Cartier for Flowers); Paola Navone for Egizia glasses and small black bowl (Corso De' Fiori); small green ceramic bowls (Japanese Lifestyle).

**PEOPLE'S SQUARE MEALS** page 116  
 Fold lamp by Alexander Taylor for Established and Sons, antique bridge playing cards, Baileys enamel teapot and mugs (Simon James Design at The Department Store); Rosenthal Tac shallow bowl and Rosenthal Moon pasta bowl (The Studio of Tableware); Rachel Carley yellow and green bowls (Sabato); blue and green bowls (Nest).

**WHAT TO DO WITH** page 125  
 Tac white Rosenthal plate (The Studio of Tableware).

**AT YOUR REQUEST** page 170  
 Royal Porcelain Caron Turquoise oval plate (The Studio of Tableware). ☺

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**Terms and conditions** The grand prize for four includes: return flights to Gisborne with Air New Zealand to the value of \$2,400; two nights (Fri-Sat only) at Singalati Beach House; exclusive use of a Lexus RX for the weekend (current driver's licence required); dinner at Soho Bar, including wine to the value of \$600; two breakfasts at Café Ruba to the value of \$200; lunch at Bushmere Estate, including wine to the value of \$350; dinner at Marina Restaurant, including wine to the value of \$600; lunch at The Wharf Café, Bar & Restaurant, including wine to the value of \$350; luxury Gisborne wine experience at The Millton Vineyard, Matawhero Wines and Vinoptima Estate to the value of \$200 and including 12 bottles of premium wine from each to the value of \$1,200; and a coastal helicopter tour with Ashworth Helicopters, valued at \$700. Employees of Fairfax Magazines and all associated sponsors and their immediate families and agencies are not permitted to enter. The judges' decision on any aspect of the competition is final and binding on every person who enters. No correspondence will be entered into. The prize is not transferable, nor able to be redeemed for cash. The winner will be notified by phone. Entries must be received on or before 21 October 2010. Competition available in New Zealand only.



## CHEESE

*see also lamb*

Sautéed Goat's Cheese & Potato  
Terrine with Pea, Beetroot & Radish  
Salad 76  
Mascarpone & Blue Cheese Polenta  
with Walnuts & Sweet Tomato  
Relish 76

## MEAT, POULTRY & GAME

### Beef

Five Spice Poached Beef with Rice  
Noodles 120  
Steak Frites with Red Wine  
Mushroom Sauce & Beurre de  
Montpellier 110  
Uighur Beef with Whole Cumin  
Seeds & Cauliflower 120

### Chicken

*see also salads & soup*

Chicken Sandwiches 82  
Farro with Chicken & Asparagus 54  
Roast Chook My Way 86  
Spanish-Style Chicken Casserole 82

### Lamb

Bread & Haloumi Stuffed Lamb with  
Greek Lentil & Tomato Salad 68  
Butterflied Leg of Lamb with Leeks  
in Wine & Walnut Aillade 64  
Dijon French Cutlets with Spring  
Vegetable Fricassée & New Potatoes 66  
Lamb Fillet with Farro, Red Chard &  
Feta Pilaf 66  
Roman-Style Leg of Lamb & Slow-  
Cooked Flat Green Beans in Tomato  
Sauce 68  
Spinach & Goat's Cheese Stuffed  
Lamb Rack 34

### Pork

Garlic Pork Meatballs with Celery 120  
Hearty Pork Hotpot with Potatoes 124  
Pancetta-Wrapped Pork Fillet &  
Braised Red Cabbage 126

### Veal

Rose Veal Ragoût with Tomato  
Buttered Noodles 102

## PASTA

Fettuccine with Fish, Fennel &  
Lemon 52  
Spaghetti with Anchovies & Greens  
with Butter Crumbs 104

## PASTRY & TARTS

Caramelised Fennel Custard Tarts  
with Black Olive, Feta & Orange  
Salad 74

## SALADS

Bitter Salad with Peas & Fennel 114  
Black Olive, Feta & Orange Salad 76  
Greek Lentil & Tomato Salad 68  
Marinated Chicken & Cracked Wheat  
Salad 84  
Pea, Beetroot & Radish Salad 78

## SEAFOOD

*see also pasta*

Chilli Salt Squid 171  
Butter Baked Fish with Fennel  
& Peas 102  
Potted Smoked Fish with Bread  
& Butter Pickle 104  
Red Snapper with Fragrant  
Tomato 122  
Seared Scallops with Sautéed  
Zucchini & Pine Nut & Pea Crush 126  
Steamed Asparagus with Seafood,  
Roasted Tomatoes & Almonds 110

## SOUP

Chicken Dumpling Soup with  
Orecchiette & Peas 86

## VEGETABLES

Caramelised Fennel 74  
Cauliflower Florets 78  
Frites 112  
Globe Artichokes with Almonds  
& Lemon 40  
Pickled Carrots 171  
Roasted Baby Beetroot 78  
Slow-Cooked Flat Beans in Tomato  
Sauce 68  
Spicy Black Beans 72  
Spring Vegetable Fricassée & New  
Potatoes 66  
Tempura Cauliflower, White Bean  
Purée, Capers, Currants & Almonds 78

## BREAD

Jalapeño Cornbread with Spicy  
Black Beans, Fried Eggs & Capsicum  
Salsa 72

## CAKES & LOAVES

Citrus Layer Cake 96  
Flourless Chocolate & Black Doris  
Plum Cake 92  
Orange & Cardamom Syrup Cake 98

Rhubarb & Rosewater Upside Down  
Cake 92  
Spiced Apple Loaf with Crumble  
Topping 96

## DESSERTS & SWEETS

Caramel Custards with Orange Salad  
& Almond Biscuits 114  
Lemon-Scented Fritters with Citrus  
Sugar 126  
Lemon Slice 171  
Raisin & Cinnamon Puddings with  
Brandy Butter 107

## SAUCES, SALSAS, SYRUPS & OTHER ACCOMPANIMENTS

Balsamic Syrup 78  
Basic Za'atar 125  
Beurre Blanc 102  
Beurre de Montpellier 112  
Beurre Noisette 102  
Black Olive & Oregano Sauce 68  
Brandy Butter 107  
Bread & Butter Pickle 107  
Chicken Stock 86  
Grand Marnier Syrup 98  
Lemon Curd 96  
Lemon Trickle Icing 96  
Red Wine Mushroom Sauce 110  
Rhubarb & Rosewater Syrup 92  
Roasted Capsicum Salsa 74  
Sweet Tomato Relish 76  
Walnut Aillade 64

## QUICK COLUMN REFERENCE

### Quick Smart

Grain, pasta, pulses 50

### What to Do With

Za'atar 125

Course You Can Do It 126

At Your Request 170



# the family that eats apart

When your teenager suddenly turns vegan, the field of human conflict expands even into the kitchen, writes **David Burton**

**R**ecently, the title of a new cookbook made me smile: *Easy Vegan*. Now there's a contradiction in terms.

I mean, a life without meat or fish is hard enough, but if you are genuinely happy to eat tofu in preference to eggs benedict or a slice of meltingly ripe brie, then you may as well crawl right now into a Himalayan snow cave and see out your days in the lotus position.

Still, in deference to your 16-year-old vegan, you prepare a delicious fresh tomato sauce with just basil, olive oil, onions and garlic, without so much as a skerrick of butter or parmesan. Then you mix through some De Cecco fettuccine, for which you paid a small fortune at the Italian shop as part-consolation for yet another spartan family meal without meat.

Whereupon your vegan examines the empty packet and announces she can't join you for dinner because the fettuccine contains egg.

It was not always thus. Once upon a time, at about the age of nine, my daughter used to wolf her steak so avidly, she'd finish before me. At the dinner table I regularly had to prevent her from taking more than her fair share of grilled sweetbreads, even though it's true that I had always encouraged her belief that she was eating Chicken McNuggets.

First, she became a vegetarian and, as difficult as that was, at least she could be given a couple of poached eggs when the rest of us had meat for dinner. But then she took to dining on Sundays with a group of Hare Krishnas. Ironically for a sect that worships the divine cowherder, Krishnas are vegans.

Now that my daughter is a born-again, all-preaching vegan (along with all her friends), these days we come together over a mutual love of Indian dhals, sambars, vegetable curries, chanting and incense.

And I have to admit there are nights when, like the wrestler entering the ring with one arm tied behind his back, I rise to the challenge of vegan cooking. After all, any klutz can work wonders with lobster, cream and butter.



## Accordingly, a system of culinary apartheid nowadays operates in my kitchen

But I have yet to become accustomed to my daughter sitting next to me at the table eating tofu while using her spare hand like a horse's blinker to shield her vision from the stare of my leftover pilchard heads. Or having her affect to retch at what I regard as the mouth-watering aroma of salmon rising from my home smoker.

It goes without saying that I had to wait until she was out of the house before I began preparing the makings for a game pie recently, which included wild duck, wild pheasant and a rabbit I'd deliberately run over on Millar Rd in Hawke's Bay. (A clean bumper hit, not a tyre squashing, I assure you.)

A system of culinary apartheid nowadays operates in my kitchen. I use separate but equal wooden spoons to simultaneously stir twin pots of risotto, one made with chicken broth, the other with vegetable stock. I've also learned that early on in the evening's cooking you can separate out a pan of vegetable base, mixing in the meat component just before serving.

Occasionally, however, the make-up of a dish absolutely insists one remains true to one's meatarian vows: while making a nam pla dressing, for example, I wait until my vegan is out of the kitchen, then grab the Thai fish sauce and surreptitiously shake in a couple of squirts – not enough to actually taste, but sufficient to round out the essential background harmony; as my grandmother used to say, "What the eyes don't see, the heart won't grieve."

Believe it or not, there is an upside to all this: nowadays, I can leave costly French brie in the fridge and return to its melting perfection a full week later, safe in the knowledge that between times the wedge will not have been scoffed by a ravenous horde of vegan bratlings.

Oh, and true to the title, *Easy Vegan* (Vatcharin Bhumichitr, Ryland, Peters & Small) really has proven a godsend, with a delicious easy recipe for pan-fried cauliflower with silverbeet and cumin-flavoured chickpeas, dressed with lemon juice and tahini. ☘



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